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THE NEW

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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

THE full story of the bloody coup in Tokio is not yet known, and its consequences can only be guessed at. But its causes are pretty clear. It was a revolt of fanatical army officers (captains and lieutenants, according to the report, but there must have been some of higher rank behind them) in command of a regiment of 3,000, against the civil government. It followed close on a general election which had registered anti-militarist, Liberal and even Socialist gains. The murdered statesmen, though hardly what we should call democrats, stood at least for some sort of constitutionalism and as opponents of military dictatorship and brutality. Admirals Okada and Saito were men who had been considerably influenced by Western ideas; and the Finance Minister, Mr. Takahashi, was struggling to cut down the monstrous military expenditure of Japan. But the aims of the rebels go farther than the mere dominance of the army over the civil power. They have a sort of "Nazi" programme affecting the whole life of Japan, and that programme has wide support in the fighting services.

The Japanese Patriots

These "ultra-patriots" propose to save their country by a return to the good old days before it was corrupted by Western theories and practices, and with this domestic reaction they would combine a ferocious chauvinism and imperialism. The announcement of the Japanese War Office on Wednesday night specified—and specified with an ominous show of approval—some of their principal aims. These are the "rooting out" of a number of persons and institutions that they regard as mischievous to the "national structure"—"the Elder Statesman, the senior statesmen's bloc, the financiers' bloc, the bureaucrats and politicians." Doubtless the disappearance of some of these would do no great harm to Japan. But the remedy of the military fanatics would obviously be more fearful than the disease, not only for the Japanese people themselves but for the world at large. The moment is critical. As we write, the mutineers are held in check but not beaten. The loyalty of the army as a whole is uncertain, and there is a danger of terms being made which will strengthen the military power, give a new fillip to the aggression in China, and bring on war against Russia.

Mr. Eden's Speech

Mr. Eden's first speech in Parliament since he became Foreign Secretary was nothing to throw up our caps about. He made the usual professions of the Government's loyalty to the League and their belief in the principle of collective security. Those professions may be sincere in his own case; they are more dubious in that of some of his colleagues. He defended, as best he could—

and that was not very well—the Government's complacency to Mussolini last spring and summer, before the Maffey Report was drafted, and afterwards too, when he was patently preparing for war on Abyssinia. And his reply to Mr. Lees-Smith, who demanded more resolute action now to stop the war, was to sneer at his "vehemence." It is not so long, if we remember aright, since Mr. Eden was widely applauded for being vehement in the same just cause. Has virtue now become vice? Or is it merely that the young lion has been successfully domesticated since his elevation to the Foreign Office? Some rude fellows, we hear, have already nicknamed him Sir Samuel Eden; but we hope it is not quite so bad as that. On the necessity for rearmament his voice was the voice of any die-hard Tory; to the all important question what exactly we are re-arming for, he offered no plain answer. Neither he nor any one else will tell us what the Government's policy is. Have they got any policy—except big armaments?

Prospects of the Oil Embargo

On the oil embargo Mr. Eden hedged, as no doubt he was bound to do, since the Cabinet had not yet decided about its action. What he did say hardly encourages us to believe that the decision, when it is at last announced, will be the right one. It is no longer pretended, at Westminster or in Whitehall, that the imposition of an oil sanction would drive Mussolini to bomb the British fleet or invade Egypt. But it would be ineffective, we are told, without the participation of the United States. That participation is, of course, far less certain than it was before Sir Samuel Hoare and M. Laval upset the apple cart. But it is not to be ruled out even now. Furthermore, the members of the League have no moral right to make America the villain of the piece. They—and Great Britain in particular, as one of the chief oil-supplying Powers—are at present violating the Covenant, in letter as well as in spirit, by providing the aggressor with one of his main sinews of war. They cannot maintain that an oil embargo, even were it only partial, would be utterly ineffective; the Experts have declared that it would seriously hamper the Italian operations. The great mass of public opinion in this country and throughout the League States is eager for the fullest possible pressure to stop the war, and disgusted at the idea of making dividends out of the butchery in Abyssinia. It is the voice of the old Eden and not the new that we want to hear at Geneva next week.

The Franco-Soviet Pact

The long debate in the Chamber of Deputies over the Franco-Soviet pact is drawing to its close, and a vote for rectification is expected by the time these lines are in print. The pact has been opposed with great heat by the Right; the weight of argument has been with the Government and the spokesmen of the Left who have defended it. The Germans have persisted in denouncing it as incompatible with the Locarno Treaties, which, as a legal document at any rate, it clearly is not. Now Mussolini has apparently discovered that he too disapproves of it, and there are fears or hopes—they are nothing more as yet—that, when it is ratified, he may join with Hitler in a dramatic gesture of repudiating Locarno. But we doubt whether either of these great actors really means to do anything desperate about it. The Germans in particular are anxious to keep on good terms with Great Britain, and they have snatched eagerly at Mr. Eden's assurance that we do not favour the "encirclement" of Germany. In point of fact nobody does favour it; and but for Germany's threats to her neighbours, her withdrawal from the League and her refusal to make the Franco-Soviet pact a Franco-Soviet-German pact; no such idea would have entered her own or anyone else's head. As for the alleged incompatibility of the pact with the Locarno treaties, M. Flandin has made a very sensible offer to have the matter settled by the International Court at the Hague. That puts Hitler on the horns of a dilemma. If he accepts the offer, he must know judgment will go against him. If he rejects it, he exposes his disbelief in his own case.

Spain After the Election

Spain is calming down after the excitement of the general election. There is no sign of "the roaring tide of Bolshevism" with which sensational journalists here and elsewhere have tried to make our flesh creep. There have been local scuffles; a number of the more timid reactionaries have bolted across the frontiers to Biarritz or Gibraltar, and thousands of Left-wing political prisoners have been released. But of violence and damage there has been singularly little, and there is nothing in the composition or the policy of the new Government to cause alarm to the bourgeois. Señor Azaña is a democrat, an anti-clerical and a republican; he is not a Socialist, and his colleagues in the Cabinet are not Socialists. They rest, of course, on Socialist support in the Cortes, and the reforms they set themselves to carry out may be expected to be socialistic. Their first task is to fortify republican and democratic institutions, to subdue clericalism and the other forces of reaction. On the constructive side, the improvement of the peasant's lot and the development of education are clearly urgent. These and other drastic reforms, if the Left-wing parties are content to hasten slowly, will not be regarded as an alternative to a Socialist commonwealth in Spain; they may be its foundation stones. But a very large measure of patience and discipline will be wanted.

The Five-Year Plan in 1936

What sensational reading the figures of Russian economic activity make! Before us are the plans for the development of Russian production during the present year. According to these figures—for the fourth year of the Second Five-Year Plan—industry over the U.S.S.R. as a whole is to turn out on the average 23 per cent. more goods than in 1935, the rate of advance being approximately the same for consumers' and producers' goods, and for agriculture as for industry. Nor is there any great doubt, apart from the inevitable uncertainties of agricultural production, of the planned totals being reached. Indeed, a good many branches of industry seem to be well ahead of the tasks assigned to them. It is less satisfactory, but not at all surprising, to observe the rapid increase in defence expenditure under the U.S.S.R. State Budget. In 1935 the sum assigned for this purpose was 6,500,000,000 roubles; but 8,200,000,000 roubles were spent. For 1936 the sum assigned is no less than 14,800,000,000 roubles, or more than twice as much as a year ago. Despite

this colossal unproductive expenditure, enough consumers' goods are to be turned out to allow the standard of life to be further raised; and even the defence estimate for 1936 accounts for under one-fifth of the total U.S.S.R. budget, excluding expenditure by the separate Republics and local bodies and out of social insurance funds. Moreover, there will be no "Defence Loan" in Russia, the huge increase in military expenditure being borne out of revenue, like the huge cost of capital equipment which the State Budget has been meeting under the Five-Year Plans.

Empire Settlement Again

A new Empire Settlement Committee, consisting partly of official, or civil service, and partly of unofficial members, has been set up this week. It remains to be seen whether it will really succeed in settling anyone in the "vast open spaces" upon which imperial propagandists are wont to dwell. The attractions of settlement in the "vast open spaces" depend on the assurance of an expanding market for the produce which the settlers can hope to grow; and in view of current trends of population and of economic policy, the expansiveness of the market for primary foodstuffs is nowadays very doubtful indeed. We can no doubt, even now, settle a large number of persons in the British Dominions—if we are prepared to offer the Dominions high enough bribes for receiving them, and to contemplate seeing a good many of them back home again before many years are over. That, at any rate, is the outstanding lesson to be learned from the more ambitious settlement schemes since 1918. But the new Committee, warned by past mistakes, will perhaps walk more carefully. In that case, it is unlikely to settle many of our unemployed in the Dominions for some time to come; but it may do some quite good work in a modest way. If the "vast open spaces" can be peopled by families that will prosper and be satisfied, well and good. But the idea of the Empire as a dumping-ground for the unwanted of the "Mother Country" is, we hope, finally discredited.

Building in 1935

The full figures of building activity in 1935 have now been published, together with the preliminary figures for January, 1936. Though they reveal nothing that is not already known, they are sufficiently remarkable. The total estimated costs of buildings approved in 1935 amounted to over £114,000,000, of which more than £78,000,000 was for dwelling houses. Both figures are "records"—the housing total being more than twice, and the grand total nearly twice, those of 1924. In comparison with 1934, the sums to be spent on houses rose by nearly £9,000,000, and on all types of building by nearly £19,000,000. In 1935 plans for 157,000 dwelling houses were approved, as against 136,000 in 1934, and of the 1935 total nearly 35,000 were to be built in Greater London, excluding the L.C.C. area. All these figures, it should be noted, refer to the areas of 146 major local authorities only; and some addition is needed in order to arrive at totals for the country as a whole. The January figures for the present year reveal no setback, over £9,000,000 of further building expenditure being approved, as against £8,262,000 in January, 1935. Factory building plans are lower at present than a year ago; but plans for shops and offices show a very great increase, and plans for dwelling houses are also somewhat higher.

Coal Measures

Within the limits of planned capitalism—which to our mind is a contradiction in terms—the research group known as P.E.P. have produced a valuable *Report on the British Coal Industry*. (It can be obtained from 16 Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.1, for 7*s.* 6*d.* in paper boards, or 10*s.* 6*d.* cloth bound.) The group fasten on the fact that in many cases miners' earnings are low, not because their rate of wages is low, but because short-time is worked. Notwithstanding the large number of miners wholly without work, unemployment is spread over a larger number of men than the present demand justifies, and the group plead for concentration of production by the more efficient mines. The Labour Government set up a Reorganisation Commission over five years ago for this purpose, but the Commission has been given the cold-shoulder by the owners and snubbed by the present Government. On the other hand P.E.P. holds that Part I of the 1930 Act, especially the provisions for the sale of quotas, has hindered the closing down of redundant pits, though it had its value at a time of falling prices. The report covers in greater or less degree every aspect of coal production, distribution and consumption, and it gathers together many suggestions which have been made to help this harassed industry. But it hardly treats with sufficient seriousness the miners' claim that the quarterly ascertainments do not give a true picture of the industry owing to the practice of transferring coal to subsidiary undertakings below the market price; as a corollary, it does not face the necessity of linking coal in an intimate way with the industries which are making huge profits out of coal; and it does not do justice to the overwhelming case for public ownership of this basic industry.

Things to Come

The Government has now issued further instalments of its intelligent man's guide to correct behaviour during an air raid. A school for instructors is to be set up to which local authorities are asked to send representatives. After a two or three weeks' course they will return to their different areas and diffuse their knowledge concerning personal protection against gas, first-aid for the gassed, the recognition of different gases and the decontamination of buildings and water supplies. At the same time rescue parties are to be organised, fully equipped with the latest designs in respirators and protective clothing and able to deal with damaged roads and buildings, floods and other likely disasters. These preparations are described with a sobriety that is almost comic when we think of the dislocation of organised society that a large-scale bombing raid would actually cause in a thickly populated area. One wonders whether, if the scientific and financial resources now squandered on rearmament were really concentrated on defence, anything more effective could be worked out. Meanwhile will the Government give instruction in the most destructive gases which its own bombers will employ or, since offence is the best defence, must such information be withheld? Perhaps we shall be told a little more about the realities of aerial warfare in the circular which is soon to be issued under the entrancing title of "Air Raid Precautions in the Home."

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POOLS—PEPPER OR FOOTBALL?

POOLS—rich men's and poor men's—have flowed into all the newspapers during the last fortnight. Our legislators may at any time now be faced with the cruel choice between a lofty rejection of the profits on sixpenny postal orders and the extra torpedo boat which could be built out of the proceeds. Last week-end one type of pool wound up with three sentences of imprisonment, and the general opinion seems to be that this was a salutary reward for this particular type of speculation. Legally the offence was the falsification of a prospectus. As the judge pointed out, there is no law against cornering pepper or anything else; it may not be a very nice thing to do, but if you can corner a market you are entitled to do it. From the social standpoint it can be argued that certain people attempted to bring about an abnormal situation and to profit by it, that they were unsuccessful, that the losses incurred, though unfortunately involving innocent people, were offset by corresponding gains elsewhere, that the price of pepper speedily adjusted itself to the real market situation, and that was the end of the matter. But that was emphatically not the end of the matter. At the time of the pepper crisis, although the amounts involved were comparatively insignificant, ugly rumours spread at home and abroad, funds were withdrawn from London, sterling weakened, gilt-edged declined, and the repercussions were such that Ministers hastened to attribute them to apprehensions of a future Labour Government. The man in the street has always been suspicious of commodity and security speculation, and hard to convince that these things are done for his ultimate benefit. Not unless he becomes a profound student of economic institutions is he able to assure himself that it is all part of the admirable mechanism for the efficient conduct of private enterprise. Of informed persons only a few eccentric critics like Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton held their noses over the wheat-pit.

But economists are coming round to the view that the ordinary man's distrust has some justification. He may read, for instance, Mr. Keynes's pungent and occasionally sardonic chapter on Long Term Expectation in his latest book. Economists, he asserts, have neglected certain aspects and developments of the investment process. Any rational element that may have existed in the investment process of former days—and he hints that even then it was not very large—has been swamped by the speculative forces continually operating through the facilities afforded by modern organised markets. To these forces Mr. Keynes refers with the utmost contempt. "The actual private object of the most skilled investment to-day is to 'beat the gun' as the Americans well express it, to outwit the crowd and to pass the bad or depreciating half-crown to the other fellow." The fine phraseology of the usual text-books, about futures, spreads, hedging, arbitrage, contango, backwardation, boils down in vulgar parlance to "passing the buck," and the business is on a level with this terminology. When the capital development of a country, says Mr. Keynes, becomes a by-product of the activities of a casino, the job is likely to be ill done.

Nor is Mr. Keynes alone among economists in thinking on these lines. Others have been attempting to relate fluctuations in economic activity to changes in confidence expressing themselves through the monetary system in changing demands for liquidity, the cumulative nature of these swings being attributable to the mass behaviour of the irrational speculator. Some would go even farther and attribute fluctuations almost solely to this cause. Others would admit that it is too much to expect the worker to be continually adapting himself to the erratic flights of the supposed controllers of enterprise, that he should run to and fro like a distracted hen looking for somewhere to lay an egg, with the not unsurprising result that in the end the poor creature becomes egg-bound. No one can ignore the American experience in the years following 1927. In the first phase the speculator went into anything, in the second phase into nothing. In one year investment was prepared to rebuild a whole continent; a year or two later its penchant for railway enterprise resulted in the production of one solitary railway truck.

In the light of all this, fortunate is the country in which the majority of the inhabitants confine their flutters to sixpenny investments in football pools. Fortunate if the man in the street is so ignorant that he would not know how to start investing in Wooloomooloo Coppers. Fortunate if the national stock market is inaccessible and too expensive for him. The working man whose "5 home 4 away" miscarries curses his luck and tries again. If he singly, or in common with others, burns his fingers, he does not sulk, pile up a bank balance, realise his holdings, refrain from consumption and let the whole economic system down. What comparison is there between the madness which spread ruin from Wall Street over the whole world and the local shuffling of money which results from sixpenny punting? If the pools get inordinate profits the bookmaking element has at least this merit, that it does not sit on its income.

There are other aspects of the matter. From the point of view of intelligent activity the argument is wholly on the side of the working class. It does know something about football; in fact it knows quite a lot. There is more intelligent comment at Highbury on a Saturday afternoon than in a whole week of City gossip. Which is the more stupid—the West End dabbling in shellac with a vague idea that it is used for varnish and gramophone records, or the East End weighing up the chances of the Arsenal and the Spurs? After all, the football fan does know the names and something of the qualities of the teams. He knows what he is betting on. Does the Stock Exchange punter? Even in the case of highly reputable firms he is solemnly informed that it is not in his interest that he should be told what are the subsidiary holdings of the concern, where they are situated, what they are doing. When shipping company A controls company B, which controls company C, which controls company D, while in turn each company has a reverse holding in each other company, what exactly does a share in, say, company C represent? Search the investor. Search the directors. The controllers of the Insull group had to admit before a Senate Inquiry that the thing had passed beyond their comprehension.

There remains the moral aspect. Strange that the acquisition of something for nothing should always and only be deleterious in the case of the poorer classes. This is best seen in the case of the dole. There is constant anxiety lest uncovenanted benefits should undermine the morale of the poor. The bestowal of uncovenanted benefits

on industrialists and investors through the medium of tariffs, subsidies and other privileges apparently does not have this effect. The rescue of acceptance houses in a crisis is good for their morale and for financial institutions in general. And in respect of the speculator no one will be corrupted if his armament shares go up from 5*s.* to 14*s.* 3*d.*, and, if he were, the unhappy Mr. Baldwin would be confessedly helpless in the matter. On the whole our legislators could more profitably spend their time in chewing over Mr. Keynes's conclusion that the duty of ordering the current volume of investment cannot safely be left in private hands. The problem of football pools can wait, and the Postmaster-General would certainly like time to think it over.

AMERICA FACES A GENERAL ELECTION

[The author of this article is a leading member of the American Commonwealth Federation, which is playing an important part in building a Third Party in the United States.]

THIS year the American people will go to the polls to register their choice for President of the United States for the ensuing four years. Will President Roosevelt be re-elected? As late as February of last year no one had the slightest doubt that he would be re-elected. Since then, however, the political situation has changed remarkably, so that even trained observers find it difficult to forecast the result of the coming election.

A recent nation-wide straw poll conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion revealed that Mr. Roosevelt would be likely now to get a bare 53 per cent. of the total vote. This poll shows conclusively that his strength has declined in considerable measure since 1933. How is this to be accounted for? I should say that the failure of his Administration to bring about anything like the prosperity which the people enjoyed in the 1920's is the principal cause of the disillusionment spreading over the country.

The failure of the Roosevelt Administration is easily explained. It made the old fatal mistake of accepting responsibility without power. It accepted the responsibility of restoring prosperity to the people without having any real power in the management and control of the business system. At the very beginning of his term of office Mr. Roosevelt passed up a perfect opportunity to bring the banking system under Government control and operation. The famous N.R.A., which appeared to be a revolutionary attempt to control industry by government in the interest of the masses, became a diabolical device for price-raising and price-fixing, and curtailment of production at the expense of the people.

Business has revived considerably since the dark days of 1931–32, yet there remain some eleven million unemployed. The building industry is still in a very bad slump, operating at only a quarter of normal activity. Export trade is still only at one-third of pre-depression figures. Wage levels, which were lowered as much as 50 per cent. in many industries, have been raised partially, but are not keeping pace with rising price levels.

These are some of the basic economic facts which are influencing political trends in America. If a "Third Party" of workers and farmers were to come out with a strong candidate for President in this year's election it should poll close to six million votes. Unfortunately, it does not appear that there will be such a candidate this year. Governor Olsen, of Minnesota, and Governor La Follette, of Wisconsin, either of whom might be such a candidate, both frown upon this proposal. They do not wish to court defeat, and furthermore they argue that such a move would inevitably result in cutting down Roosevelt's vote, and thus making certain the election of a Republican President, which they think would be the worst calamity that could befall the country. In any event, however, "Third Party" candidates for Congress will stand in numerous districts, and a goodly number will be elected. It is pretty likely that this group will hold the balance of power in the next Congress.

In the absence of a Labour Party presidential candidate several millions of dissatisfied, short-sighted voters will express their discontent with the Democrats by voting Republican. Mr. Hoover, who was so thoroughly repudiated in 1932, will not be the Republican candidate this time. At the present moment there are two men from the Middle-West, one or the other of whom will most likely be the Republican presidential nominee. One is Mr. Alfred Landon, Governor of Kansas, and the other is Mr. Arthur Vandenberg, a Senator from Michigan. The Republicans have definitely decided to choose their presidential candidate from the Middle-West, because this section will be the battle-ground of the coming election. The South is traditionally certain to go Democratic, and the North-East is pretty certain to go Republican, while the Middle-West and the Far West are doubtful territory. Furthermore, the Republican Party managers recognise that it is smart politics to choose a candidate whose home is far away from New York City and Wall Street. The American people since the depression set in have been bitter against anyone closely connected with Wall Street. For this reason Mr. Ogden Mills, of New York, Secretary of the Treasury in Mr. Hoover's Cabinet, who is ambitious to be President, will not be considered by the Republican managers.

Mr. Landon is a new figure in American politics. The fact that he was elected Governor of Kansas a few years ago, when practically every State in the Union was swept by the Democrats, singled him out in the eyes of Republicans as a hope for the future. Soon after it was discovered that Kansas was the only State in the Union that could show a balanced Budget. Republican publicity organs got busy telling the rest of the country about this man Landon of Kansas. Here was a man who epitomised the Republican doctrines of "balance the Budget," and "no government interference with business." Unfortunately for Mr. Landon, William Randolph Hearst is championing him.

Senator Arthur Vandenberg, of Michigan, is looked upon as second in line for the Republican nomination. He is not ambitious to run, but would undoubtedly accept the nomination if it were given to him. Coming from Michigan he is well placed geographically, and he also happens to be somewhat of a compromise between the reactionary and the more liberal elements of the party. Liberal Republican leaders such as Senator Borah are more likely to campaign for Vandenberg than Landon in the General Election, and Borah's help is needed by the Republicans. Borah himself is being talked about as a candidate, but there is no chance of his getting the nomination.

On the Democratic side it is pretty certain that Roosevelt will be renominated by his party, although he is under heavy attack from Democratic leaders such as Al Smith, Democratic candidate for President in 1928, and Governor Tallmadge of Georgia. Already an anti-Roosevelt convention has been held in the South. The Smith-Tallmadge wing of the Democratic Party is heavily financed by the wealthy Du Pont interests, and it is bound to cause turmoil in the Party convention to be held a couple of months hence. There is an intensely bitter feeling against Roosevelt in his own party, and the atmosphere is full of vituperation and slander. Roosevelt is charged with breaking his party's platform pledges, and breaking his oath to defend the Constitution. Seeing this revolt within his own party, Roosevelt, desiring another term in office, has decided not to press the Constitutional issue. He has accepted the recent adverse decisions of the Supreme Court invalidating all his New Deal measures without a murmur of protest. And he is calling the Democratic Convention to meet in Philadelphia, the birthplace of the American Constitution, where he will be sure to attract attention as a true defender of that famous document written in 1787.

Mr. Roosevelt has most of the farmers and organised labour

with him. He has done more for these two groups than any President since the Civil War of 1861–65. But it must be remembered that there are only about three million workers organised into Trade Unions out of a total of about forty million wage-earners. The American Federation of Labour will support him, in spite of the fact that he has failed Labour in many crucial instances.

Mr. Roosevelt is the Lloyd George of American politics. Like Lloyd George he has the gift of oratory that charms his listeners. His heart is with the forgotten man, the man who is down and out through no fault of his own; but his head carries no consistently worked out philosophy of government to meet the tragic problems of a world in which men, women, and children by the million are in want, while mills and factories lie idle, and food is destroyed because it cannot be sold on the market. Like Lloyd George he is a political opportunist with humanitarian impulses; he appeals to capitalists and workers alike for support.

The outcome of the American election this year will have important consequences for the British people. If Roosevelt is returned to office the British people can count upon sympathetic co-operation of the American Government with Great Britain and the League of Nations. On the other hand, a Republican President is certain to pursue a policy of complete political isolation from Europe and the League.

ROBERT HECKERT

A LONDON DIARY

"WHAT will be the effect of this film?" I asked myself as I came away from *Things To Come* at the Leicester Square Theatre. That, I am sure, is the question that Mr. Wells would want me to ask. For there is no dispute that the picture is a photographic masterpiece, technically a supreme achievement of the cinema. No author or producer could ask for more than the gasp of wonder and astonishment that goes up when the great new peace aeroplanes of the future arrive through the clouds to put the broken world to rights. Models have never before been used with such success; nor has the film ever given us anything so magical as this brave new world which Mr. Wells and Mr. Korda and Mr. Mann have created for us. To niggle about details when the scope is so vast and the whole achievement so great would be absurd. It is a pity perhaps that the boss who dominates the gangster world that follows the breakdown of civilisation should just be a "big stiff." If he were more terrifying, as he surely would be in fact, the contrast between the calm assurance of Raymond Massey, as one of the new air supermen, and the prevalent terror of everyone else would surely be more effective. But detailed criticism of the actors and of their lines is not in this case important. The film is a public event and the question is what Mr. Wells's message amounts to and whether he has succeeded in getting it over.

* * *

Mr. Wells gives us 1940 for the great war, and if it is anti-war propaganda to show us the intrusion of the bomber into the peaceful jollifications of a London Christmas, this could scarcely be better done. If he is right about the next war—and it is difficult at the moment to see how he can fail to be—few, if any, of us to-day will live to see the shape of things to come; we shall only hear them coming. The war in Mr. Wells's story continues spasmodically even after the pestilence which wipes out half the population of the world, and it is only brought to an end when a group of supermen, who have kept alive the tradition of science and the knowledge of how to build aeroplanes, contrive, by some unexplained miracle, to solve all the problems of economic and political organisation and build a beautiful and peaceful society on the ruins of the old. This section of the film must, I think, have given Mr. Wells particular pleasure. It is a hymn to scientific reconstruction. The music and rhythm of the impersonal machines as they build civilisation anew is the best part of the film. But it is here that my critical faculties got to work. I know that one cannot say everything in a single film; but I cannot help feeling that Mr. Wells has evaded the real crux. Once he believed in salvation through the enlightened business-man; now it is the super-airmen. To invent for them a peaceful gas that puts their enemies to sleep instead of killing them is a pleasant way of getting round the most difficult of all problems. There are plenty of people in this world who think themselves supermen, but who have no way of imposing their will except by the use of the very weapons whose use means the destruction of human life and of civilisation and which cannot therefore be the weapons of civilised man. I am not pretending that I can solve this problem; it defeats me as it has defeated Mr. Wells and as it defeated Mr. Shaw in the last act of *Major Barbara*. If only someone would invent a peace gas before the final catastrophe! I want it now.

* * *

The last part of the film is amazingly beautiful, but intellectually rather disappointing. Sir Cedric Hardwicke, as the artist who wishes to return to nature, leads an army of citizens to destroy the big gun which is to begin the peaceful conquest of the moon. But we cannot take sides in this conflict, because we know nothing about the quality of life lived by these new-world Luddites. Are we to assume that in changing to a society of order and beauty mankind has learnt nothing? How is the work done in the new society? Even machines, as Mr. Wells has reminded us in some of his more realistic but less pleasant Utopias, have to be looked after by somebody. And if mankind has at last found leisure and plenty, how does it occupy itself? We are back here at the eternal problem of Utopia—a problem which Mr. Wells came more near to solving in the original book, *The Shape of Things to Come*, than he has in the play that is built on it or any of his earlier Utopias. For the first time, in *The Shape of Things to Come* he made a life of universal leisure sound plausible and even enjoyable; his picture of what people could do once their minds were set on knowledge and beauty; how they could create new species and make the Sahara blossom as a garden was one of his finest flights of imagination. The object of achieving a peaceful and Socialist order instead of a world of greed and fear is to release the fine things in men and make men happy. But in the film he can tell us no more than that men are ever wanting to "progress"—anywhere, just for the sake of progressing. When they have conquered the moon there will still be the stars. Nowhere does he hint that the mass of mankind may ever learn to enjoy life for its own sake, to find adequate pleasure in personal relationships, in the increase of knowledge and in the creation of beauty. And if he is right that men will remain, when they have solved problems of economics and political organisation, the same greedy, competitive, petty and quarrelsome creatures, his message is surely one of despair. Despair, not because there will be war in 1940, but because there will be war in 2040 too.

* * *

In a carnal knowledge case that came up at the Cambridge Assizes recently the girl was fourteen years old and the man just under twenty-one. Mr. Justice McKinnon very properly put the man on probation for two years. But in his summing up he made a remark that should not, I think, pass without comment. He said it would not be a bad thing if both these young people might have had "some salutary punishment in a little whipping." We all know the feeling that so-and-so needs a little whipping. But surely it shows an extraordinary lack of imagination on the judge's part to make such a remark to a child of fourteen who was not even a defendant in the case, who had given birth to a child, and had undergone what must have been for a girl of that age (whatever her character) the appalling ordeal of giving detailed evidence to the police and at the trial. And how, in the name of common sense, would whipping help the situation?

* * *

Amongst other examples I gave a fortnight ago of the sort of question I should have liked the Royal Commission on

"It's only a beautiful picture in a beautiful golden frame"

Drawn by ARTHUR WRAGG

the private manufacture of arms to have put to Captain Ball, I referred to the project of a Swiss banking corporation to finance a munitions contract for China. The manager of the Swiss Bank Corporation asks me to state categorically that his Corporation has never had any such transaction under consideration and that since it is the only Swiss banking institution in this country, he considers that there can be no truth in the story.

* * *

I see that two "Left" publishing houses, Messrs. Martin Lawrence and Wishart, are joining forces in a new and enlarged company. They announce an ambitious programme. To me the most interesting question is whether they find budding proletarian talent that does not now make its way into print. One or two books—*Love on the Dole*, for instance—suggests that it may exist. A second publishing event is that Mr. H. R. Hale, until recently a director of Messrs. Hutchinson, is starting a new publishing house with a telegraphic address that suggests an unusually developed sense of humour. You remember that Byron sent his publishers a copy of the New Testament with a verse altered to read "Now Barabbas was a publisher"? Well, Mr. Hale's telegraphic address is "Barabbas."

* * *

I am glad to see that British universities have not been bamboozled by the Nazi invitation to attend the Heidelberg celebrations, and that a Latin address from the Congregation of Oxford University, in rightly paying tribute to the past achievements of Heidelberg, refers to the recent exclusion of students and hopes that Heidelberg will flourish as it once did in the past. Oxford is not sending a representative. Perhaps Oxford opinion would have been even more strongly stated if it had been noticed that June 1936 is not in fact even the 550th anniversary of the University but the end of the 549th! June 27–30th has obviously been chosen for propagandist reasons.

* * *

For my, or rather other people's, sins, I had to go to Brixton the other day for a couple of hours. I bought a return ticket at Victoria Station which cost me 10*d*. On my return to Brixton station on the way home, I was surprised to see from a notice that I could get a ticket to Victoria by putting 3*d*. in a slot machine. The booking clerk admitted the anomaly. From Victoria to Brixton costs 5*d*., from Brixton to Victoria costs 3*d*. There were cheap 3*d*. tickets from Brixton to London, but none from Victoria to Brixton. So if I had bought two single tickets instead of a return, my fare would only have cost me 8*d*.! CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Miss Nancy Moller.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Meanwhile, he continued, the war goes on, "although we don't take quite as much notice of it as we did, and I don't think the Italians or the Abyssinians do either."—Report of Lord Brocket's speech to local Conservative Association in *Welwyn Times*.

If ever war is declared on Great Britain, Sir Mark Grant-Sturgis will only have to look at a mummified hawk which he owns. The bird will be bleeding from beak and breast. The hawk originally came from Egypt, and I understand that its habit of bleeding during British crises was discovered at the time of the Boer War. Throughout this war and the Great War the hawk bled continuously. Sir Mark saw the bird the other day. Unmoved by Italo-Abyssinian bloodshed, the patriotic hawk remains as dry as a bone.—*Daily Mirror*.

The demand for Bibles by the Abyssinian warriors was a wonderful testimony to its appeal, said the Mayor.—*Worcester Evening News*.

He displayed what he said was "an attempt to make gas masks attractive," a mask in flesh-tinted rubber with a snout like a human nose, and goggles the size of spectacles. "Women have tried it on," he said, "but none has bought one."—*Daily Herald* description of British Industries Fair.

Among those introduced to the King was a live starfish. It was being projected on a screen by a special apparatus.—*Daily Mirror*.

Titled boarders accepted gratis excellent seaside boys' school.—Advt. in the *Times*.

Mr. T. Springer, who defended, said it could not be held that a man committed a criminal offence when he was not aware what he was doing. Before a man could be driving dangerously he must be wide awake.—*Evening Standard*.

With the passing of the Housing Act, 1935, it is only to be expected that the slum clearance campaign will be intensified. . . . It may be opportune, accordingly, to consider some of the practical measures which owners may adopt in order to reduce the severity of any action that might be taken. . . . Now the first step to be taken once property happens to come within a clearance area, is to make objections to the proposals. It is immaterial whether or not these objections are well-founded.—*Law Times*.

SOCIAL CREDIT UP-TO-DATE

THE *New Age*, "the journal which discovered Douglas and made his name," recently remarked of *Social Credit*, the new official paper, that it "no longer claims to advocate Social Credit." This has the sting of the very-nearly-true; it points directly to recent curious developments in the Social Credit Movement.

In 1933, Major Douglas, who till then had refused to associate himself with any organised group for the propagation of his ideas, agreed to the formation of a Social Credit Secretariat with himself as Chairman. Originally merely an advisory body, this later became an elected executive organisation to establish Social Credit and to serve as headquarters for the movement in Great Britain.

The Secretariat stands for action based on a speech by Major Douglas in June, 1934, wherein he essayed to explain to his followers the true nature of democracy and what had to be done about it, especially at election times. His view was that "the people" rarely exercise reason and, when they do, almost invariably arrive at the wrong conclusions. Nevertheless they do know what they want; they want more money and less work. He therefore advised that "one by one the voters should be asked whether they are in favour of a larger personal income with absolute security, via the National Dividend . . . (and) should then definitely be asked for a pledge to vote for no candidate who is not prepared to ask for that dividend." They must demand results not consider methods of obtaining them. That is a job for unspecified "experts." As W. L. Bardsley, Secretariat Secretary, expresses it:

> If we tell people that poverty can be abolished and they agree that they want poverty abolished, all they have to do is to demand it. Yet many of them will want to start an argument about how it is to be done. They must be shown that such an attitude is a menace to themselves, to their neighbours, and to democracy.

Social Crediters are going from house to house asking the voter to sign a form stating that he knows poverty is unnecessary and must be abolished by the payment to every Briton of a National Dividend, i.e., a free income for life. This dividend must not increase taxes or prices. Parliament exists to make his will prevail and he will vote for no parliamentary candidate who will not promise that this shall be carried out. "If the present M.P. here won't undertake this I will vote for some other party, and keep on changing until my policy has been achieved." Canvassers are officially warned not to argue and, if possible, to avoid all mention of Social Credit. "If the canvasser stops and tries to explain the technicalities . . . he raises so many doubts and difficulties

in the mind of the elector that he becomes too bewildered to sign the pledge form." In short, blind faith is demanded. In addition, prospective M.P.'s have been asked to give a written undertaking: "I hereby undertake to act promptly in accordance with the clearly expressed wishes of the majority of my constituents as manifested to me from time to time." At the recent election thirty-four candidates signed, of whom fourteen were elected, and one M.P. has signed since.

The Secretariat required a weekly publication and proposed to use the *New Age* since it had acted for the movement for fifteen years. But negotiations with its editor, Mr. Arthur Brenton, broke down, and the rift is rapidly growing wider. In August, 1934, the Secretariat started their own journal, *Social Credit*.

Instead of achieving unification, the Secretariat has caused dissension, for its campaign has not been approved by important groups within the movement. The Green Shirts, led by John Hargrave, have formed the Social Credit Party of Great Britain. At the last election they supported a candidate who stood for a full Social Credit policy. He was ignored by the Secretariat, who gave their support to two candidates who stood for National Dividends without openly advocating Social Credit. All three lost their deposits. The Green Shirt view of the Electoral Campaign is that it can achieve nothing. On the other hand, Major Douglas states that "if there were a Social Credit Party in this country, long before it became a formidable menace its organisation would contain in most of its key positions a set of rogues who would make the best exhibits of Smith Square, Abingdon Street, and Palace Chambers look like respectable citizens."

Another large group, the Prosperity Campaigners, led by Social Crediters but supported by other monetary reformers, have rejected the Electoral Campaign in favour of the collection of signatures to a petition to the King praying for a Judicial Commission to inquire into the present financial and economic system. They complain of

> The mischievous articles discrediting the Prosperity Campaign which appear in its (the Secretariat's) journal and the refusal to publish articles or letters giving a correct explanation of our policy and activities, together with incorrect reports of the activities of its own groups, the discontent being aroused throughout the movement by its attitude, the deliberate policy of dissension in the rank and file of groups not in agreement with its policy.

Internal strife is bitter.

What of the Electoral Campaign? It is based upon the exercise by the electorate of power without responsibility. It quite illogically assumes that "the people" are incapable of intelligent views on practical policies but competent to draw correct conclusions concerning the true causes of such distributive or, more correctly, exchange failures as have resulted in "surpluses" of wheat and some other products. The Campaigners insist that the voter shall take for granted that "there is plenty of everything both actually and potentially," and that there is but one reason why this wealth is not distributed —lack of purchasing power.

When Sir Josiah Stamp, in a lecture before the British Science Guild, examined the facts, Mr. Bardsley wrote a reply in *Social Credit*. Its nature may be judged from the following: "I am concerned to expose, not to combat, the suggestion that there is no real plenty; which is a childish suggestion, no longer worthy of discussion by adults." But the very thorough examination just completed by the Brookings Institute in America led them to a conclusion similar to that of Sir Josiah Stamp: "It would seem to be evident that we have not as yet reached the age of abundance of which we all like to dream, and that extensive leisure has not as yet been forced upon us as the alternative to a surfeit of goods and services." But the efficacy, even the bare possibility, of free incomes wholly depends upon the correctness of the Douglas analysis, which purports to demonstrate that industry continuously and inevitably distributes purchasing power hopelessly inadequate to meet prices consumers are called upon to pay.

Yet the more Major Douglas's arguments have been examined by economists the more they have been discredited. Such success as he has gained is almost wholly among those ignorant of economics and knowing very little of Social Credit; the Electoral Campaign is specially directed to those possessing these two qualifications. It is precisely the "experts" who are not merely unconvinced but contemptuous. Mr. E. F. Nash is representative of expert opinion when he writes in *Machines and Purchasing Power*: "Thus our conclusions need not be subject to any doubt or qualification whatever. Social Credit is simply another name for continued and progressive inflation. As a foundation for a reformed monetary system it is a fantastic absurdity." Mr. R. G. Hawtrey of the Treasury has characterised the Douglas arguments as "puerile."

An obvious criticism is that the National Dividend, with the demand for no rise in prices (in the minds of Social Crediters to be effected by the technical device they call the Just Price), is in itself a vote for a particular scheme or method. In fact the Prosperity people, who originally included these demands in their Petition, have now dropped them precisely because "to mention any particular method of monetary reform was to prejudge the issue."

In short the Electoral Campaign has in view the achievement of Social Credit while pretending to ignore it. It attempts, for example, to hold a Socialist to a pledge which would debar him from voting for a Labour candidate simply because he would be supporting a plan fully worked out (by experts) for the abolition of poverty by the nationalisation of key industries and public control of banking and credit. Ostensibly he is debarred from voting for a method; in fact, he is required to vote only for the Social Credit method of a National Dividend and the Just Price.

Such efforts to trick the electorate will not succeed. It will be difficult to get sufficient voters to sign the pledge, but still more difficult to get other than a tiny proportion of them to respect it. As the *New Age* says:

> The pledge represents no more than a transient intention (even if that) on the part of an irresolute individual to perform an indefinite action in problematical circumstances at an unknown time.

In Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here* Windrip by similar methods and promises achieves the Presidency of the U.S.A. When, however, people demand their promised dividends every tenth man is shot and half the remainder imprisoned in concentration camps. One Canadian newspaper calls it "a good scheme that might as well be tried in Alberta as anywhere else." We may continue to believe that "it can't happen here." No election result in this country will be decided by the Social Credit Electoral Campaign.

J. A. FRANKLIN

UNREASONABLE DISLIKE

I NEVER see the controversy about phonetic spelling reopened —it has been reopened in the *Times* during the past week— without wondering whether my dislike of phonetic spelling is based on reason or due merely to prejudice. I confess I disliked it at first sight. It seemed to me like a horrible workhouse costume being foisted on a noble language. It was an interference with the fine capriciousness, the gay illogicality, of Nature. It was the thin end of the wedge of science threatening literature.

How repellent to think of Shakespeare appearing in so mean a garb! The great speeches in *Hamlet*, I told myself, would then look like excerpts from the *Bad Boy's Diary*. I could not conceive Romeo's addressing Juliet in print except in the spelling that I had learnt so easily at Miss Hardy's school.

That is what makes me suspect my dislike of phonetic spelling. For, while I objected to the proposal to print Shakespeare in phonetic spelling, I have found myself objecting equally strongly, or almost so, to the growing custom of printing the old authors in the spelling they themselves used. I have upheld Miss Hardy's spelling, not only

against the phoneticians, but against Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, and all the great authors down to Jane Austen.

This certainly looks like a preposterous example of complacent Victorianism. Having been brought up on *Sullivan's Spelling-Book Superseded*, I seem to have taken for granted that the laws of spelling, erratic for centuries, had now been perfected and were sacrosanct for ever. Shakespeare, I knew, was the greatest of writers, but I also knew that he could not spell. Even the translators of the Bible, all but inspired as they turned the inspired books into English, lacked inspiration in their spelling. I myself was able to spell better than any of them. No wonder that, gazing down from my eminence, I felt no desire to return to the semi-literacy of the Jacobeans and Elizabethans.

It was not that I took no pleasure in the grotesque misspellings of the older writers. I enjoyed Montaigne all the more because Florio, in translating him, spelt word after word like the dunce of the school. These blunders in spelling gave a touch of happy quaintness to Montaigne's sentences, and made him at times more amusing than he intended to be. Even Shakespeare and Milton I like to read occasionally in the original spelling. It seems to bring the reader a step nearer the age in which they lived—to deceive him into thinking that he is next door to a contemporary. Hence I hold that, though all the popular editions of the great writers should be printed in modern spelling, it adds appreciably to the pleasures of reading to have special editions of their works in which the old spelling is retained.

What I dislike is a pedantic reverence for the old spelling, a passionate loyalty even to the ancient misprints. There are some people who appear to think that you cannot fully enjoy the seventeenth-century poets unless you read them in an edition that reproduces exactly their crazy spelling and alien punctuation. This I believe to be a heresy. Shakespeare's spelling does not bring us closer to Shakespeare's spirit. It distracts us from it. To his contemporaries his spelling was ordinary, inconspicuous, clear as a well at the bottom of which his rich meaning lay. To us, on the other hand, his spelling is extraordinary, fantastic, slightly blurring our vision of what is at the bottom of the well. I feel sure that the best spelling in which to read a great writer is a spelling of undistracting ordinariness. After all, if it is necessary to have Shakespeare in his original spelling, how much more necessary it must be to know, not only how he spelt his words, but how he pronounced them! Yet who but an antiquarian would prefer a Falstaff reproducing the old pronunciation to a Falstaff speaking English as it is spoken in the twentieth century? A Falstaff speaking as an Elizabethan would distract us from his humour by his accent. As we listened to him, we should be sacrificing the essential to the superficial. And, in doing so, we should become less the contemporaries of Shakespeare as the result of an attempt to become more so.

In this way I do my best to give my prejudice against the old spelling an appearance of reason. And in much the same way I try to give a basis of reason to my dislike of the new spelling. I cannot see any need for it. It seems to me as unnecessary and as scientific as proportional representation. A number of great men declare in the *Times* that the time spent in learning English spelling at school retards the education of children—that, if they were taught phonetic spelling, they might gain something like a year in the progress of their studies. Here, it seems to me, they overlook the usefulness of modern English spelling in the education of the memory. After all this is the great age of memory-training, and how better can we begin to train our memories than by learning to spell "niece," "receive," "fuchsia," "phthisis," and "apophthegm"? And to learn spelling is a training, not only of the mind, but of the character. Many a child, having learnt at last to spell "fuchsia," has felt a wave of triumphant self-confidence passing through his being, the ripples from which endure for years. I have known a boy to wear a manlier look as a result of being sure of the spelling of "accommodate." The soul is conscious of a new decisiveness when the mind is made up as to the number of "l's" in "quarrelled." On the other hand, many an otherwise promising child has been turned into a Balfourian vacillator through hesitating over whether to spell "biassed" with one "s" or two. My only complaint against English spelling is that there are one or two words like this of which two spellings are equally permissible. Here alone I see a legitimate opening for spelling reform.

Apart from the usefulness of illogical spelling as an education of the memory and character, however, it seems to me that phonetic spelling is impossible in a country in which pronunciation is not uniform. As Mr. George Sampson has pointed out, the same word would look a different word when phonetically spelt by a Yorkshireman and a Cockney. As things are at present the Yorkshireman and the Cockney pronounce a word differently, but spell it the same way. Under system of really phonetic spelling, they would not only pronounce it differently, but spell it differently. This, it seems to me, would scarcely make for greater intelligibility. We have already seen the ravages made by phonetic spelling in the writings of novelists who attempt to reproduce dialect in their dialogue. Take the word "what," for example. The Cockney novelist spells it "wot." Kipling, on the other hand, trying to imitate the brogue of an Irish soldier, spells it "phwat." There is no agreement among the English-speakers of the world even as to how to pronounce the word "world." Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Baldwin spell it the same way, but they do not pronounce it the same way. Even the simple numerals, "one," "two," and "four," are pronounced in different ways in different counties.

This may be a good or a bad state of affairs; but I have never yet heard anyone suggesting that it would be a good thing to impose a uniform pronunciation on English-speakers. Some years ago, indeed, vehement complaints were made against the B.B.C. on the ground that it was endangering local dialects by popularising a South-of-England pronunciation in its announcements. Sentimental devotees of dialect almost went so far as to demand that Yorkshire children should be deliberately trained at school to speak with a Yorkshire accent. Yet, before phonetic spelling can become a possibility, all these local dialects must be rooted out, and the English of the Orkney Islands must be all but indistinguishable from the English of Somerset, and the English of Somerset from the English of the West-End of London.

For myself, I can imagine a perfectly happy world existing without dialects, but I do not think the abolition of dialects would do much to increase the world's happiness. Therefore I do not think it an object worth striving for. Therefore I think that phonetic spelling also is an object not worth striving for. In this and other such ways I attempt to give a veneer of reason to my prejudice against phonetic spelling. Y. Y.

THE LITTLE BIRD

So highly is the intelligence of the British Foreign Office rated abroad that an American paper has suggested that the Maffey Report was a British plant on the innocent Italians.

AN Inter-Departmental Note
They made and pigeon-holed it;
Then from the Foreign Office cote
Some blighter snatched and sold it.

Though unstained virtue was revealed
By agency mysterious,
Official lips came half-unsealed
To state the leak was serious.

A *little bird* the paper *stole*,
And now it is suggested
That in that secret pigeon-hole
A homing pigeon nested.

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

THE UNITED STATES AND THE OIL SANCTION

SIR,—Indefinite as was Mr. Eden's speech in Monday's debate' it indicated plainly what will be his line of defence if he acquiesces next week in the dropping of the oil sanction by the Committee of Eighteen. The responsibility will be thrown on the United States for failing to undertake to refrain from filling the gap left by the sanctionists. A summary of America's recent moves in this matter may suggest—first, that the League itself is largely to blame for her backsliding; secondly, that a firm stand by the League might even yet induce repentance.

During the first two months of the war, i.e. so long as League action carried out the spirit of Sir Samuel Hoare's speech of September 11th, the attitude of the United States Government promised exceedingly well. On October 5th, two days before the League Council declared Italy the aggressor, President Roosevelt by proclamation recognised that a state of war existed between Italy and Ethiopia, prohibited arms exports to both countries, and warned his people that those who "voluntarily engaged in any transactions of any character with either of the belligerents" or travelled on their vessels, did so at their own risk. He thus tacitly abandoned the traditional claim to neutral rights and freedom of the seas.

On October 21st, replying to an inquiry from the League Co-ordination Committee, Secretary Hull declared the United States to be "deeply interested in the prevention of war and hence the sanctity of treaties," and also desirous "not to contribute to a prolongation of the war." On October 30th, the President said:

> In the course of war tempting trade opportunities may be offered to our people to supply materials which would prolong the war. I do not believe that the American people will wish for abnormally increased profits that temporarily might be secured by greatly extending our trade in such materials; nor would they wish the struggles on the battlefield to be prolonged because of profits accruing to a comparatively small number of American citizens. Accordingly the American government is keeping informed as to all shipments consigned for export to both belligerents.

Secretary Hull spoke to the same effect, adding that

> an early peace, with the restoration of normal business and normal business profits, is far sounder and far preferable to temporary and risky war profits.

The League's adoption on November 6th of an embargo on oil, coal, iron, etc., not to come into force "until conditions for rendering it effective appear to be realised" was followed by a series of acts by the Federal Government obviously designed simultaneously to encourage the League and discourage the increasing trade in these materials. On November 15th, Secretary Hull directly warned American people that these commodities, though not actually "implements of war," were "essential war materials" and that "this class of trade is directly contrary to the policy of this Government, as announced in official statements of the President and Secretary of State, and it is also contrary to the general spirit of the recent Neutrality Act."

Secretary Ickes, acting as Petroleum Administrator, also warned domestic producers to "keep the spirit and letter" of the Neutrality Act by refusing to sell "oil and war materials to Italy." Not content with words, but precluded by their own definition of "implements of war" from actually prohibiting the export of oil, the Federal Departments concerned did their best, e.g., by warning all the shipping lines which receive Government loans (of which there were 200 or 300 outstanding) that the carrying of the essential war materials referred to in Secretary Hull's statement of November 15th was "distinctly contrary to the policy of the Government"; by threatening to foreclose the Federal mortgages on the tanker "Ulysses," which was about to sail with 12,000 tons of oil to Italy; and by announcing that the labour arbitrators would support the strike of union labourers against a ship carrying war material to belligerents.

Then came a series of events which gave a chill to American endeavours and must have caused the President to ask himself why he should strain his powers and risk his popularity to avoid frustrating a League so half-hearted and wavering in its own policy.

On November 24th, France and Britain asked the League to postpone action on the oil embargo. On December 8th, the *New York Times* reported that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, largely controlled by the British Government, had on November 19th shipped 42,000 barrels of fuel from Port Said to the Italian navy in addition to its ordinary contract. On December 9th came the Hoare-Laval proposals. Is it surprising that from then onwards there should have been a steadily increasing reluctance to endorse the President's policy and give him the power for which he asked to restrict exports of war materials to the "normal" quantities? But his influence remains strong and his previous declarations on record. Suppose the League were to refute the cynics by imposing an oil embargo, facing the financial loss to its members and the anger of Italy, would the United States really face the responsibility of making its sacrifices of no effect; and if it did so at first, would there not be such a rallying of all the forces in the States which care for peace or for honour that at best the President would get his way; and at worst, would such a betrayal occur again?

Judging however by Monday's debate, it seems much more likely that the Cabinet is even now congratulating itself on the excellent excuse provided by the United States for burying the oil sanction and is instructing a tamed Mr. Eden to go forth next Monday to assist—with what feelings we can only guess—at its interment.

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE

House of Commons, S.W.1.

POLICY IN ARMS

SIR,—I do not want to take up valuable space, but I should be grateful if you would allow me to make a brief reply to your observations upon the letter from me which you published last week.

I think that Sir John Simon rightly refused to embark upon an aggressive policy against Japan:

(1) Because of our vulnerability, and lack of armaments, in the Far East;

(2) Because the United States Government was not in a position to give us armed assistance, and had no intention of doing so in any circumstances; and

(3) Because, in my opinion, such action on our part would have strained the machinery of the League to breaking point.

I do not agree with you that we have refused seriously to apply sanctions in the case of Italy. The facts dispute it. So far, we have not applied an oil sanction:

(1) Because we could not carry France with us;

(2) Because it was very doubtful whether it could be made effective; and

(3) Because our Fleet is not powerful enough to conduct a war against Italy single-handed, and at the same time discharge its obligations on the trade routes of the Empire.

The first point is one of overwhelming force. If we cannot carry the other major Powers of the League along with us at every stage, the League is shattered.

Finally, may I say that I entirely agree with you that armaments should be related to policy? But, like Mr. Nicolson, I believe the policy of the present Government to be one of "steady and collective resistance to unprovoked aggression" within, and through the medium of, the League of Nations. Admittedly the Hoare-Laval proposals constituted a deviation from this policy. But they and their authors have been repudiated. And at present I can see no reason for doubting the integrity of Mr. Eden.

Events in Europe to-day are moving with a disquieting rapidity. We have already been caught napping once—fortunately not too late. But we cannot put the whole responsibility indefinitely upon the French and Russian armies. Believing as I do that a strong League of Nations is now the only hope for peace, and knowing something of what is going on on the Continent, I want us to do our share in strengthening the League while there is still time.

17 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1. ROBERT BOOTHBY

["Aggressive policy against Japan" is good! Great Britain was not asked to violate the Covenant, but to uphold it by (*a*) welcoming the offer of a joint policy in regard to Japan made to the League Powers by Mr. Stimson and the American Government, and (*b*) considering what form of League action would be suitable in the circumstances. Instead of that Great Britain supported Japan's aggression, alienated America, and discredited the League. Mr. Boothby had better read the documented account of the facts in *The Dying Peace*, by Vigilantes (published at this address) or *Inquest on Peace* (Gollancz). He has simply got the facts all wrong. As to Italy the French always came with us when we gave a lead, oil sanctions would have been

effective with American co-operation and the Americans were again snubbed when they offered it, and no one, least of all this journal, suggested a British war with Italy. We moved our Fleet to the Mediterranean for Imperial purposes without reference to the League, and when we did ask the French and other Powers to support us in case of an attack they agreed and the French fleet moved to our support. Mr. Boothby will have to try another tack.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

LABOUR AND THE ARMS RACE

SIR,—I must congratulate you upon your article under the above heading in your last issue, and can only hope that you yourself do not underestimate its significance and importance.

This question of support or boycott of a future war need not be a party question in the narrower sense, though it is one in which it is obviously the duty of the Labour Party to take a bold initiative.

Whilst the international situation has deteriorated at an alarming pace—and must continue to do so unless practical steps are taken to reverse the present drift of affairs—it will be generally admitted that the forces making for international sanity were never so potentially strong as at the present time. For various reasons, however, they remain disunited and unorganised, therefore only spasmodically coherent.

This is partly due to the complicated manner in which party issues upon the peace question were presented (or misrepresented) at the last election.

The result of the national Peace Ballot, the public indignation at the Hoare-Laval peace proposals, together with the fact that not 5 per cent. of the candidates at the last election dared to oppose the League principles, all prove conclusively that wholehearted and honest support for the Covenant of the League of Nations is the overwhelming desire of the majority of the people of this country. It is both unnecessary, and must be disastrous, for this support to remain powerless for lack of definite and courageous leadership.

The position amounts to this: the Imperialists, notwithstanding the fact that their following is almost negligible, are winning the game simply through superior tactics.

The electorate is being alternately frightened and cajoled, with the greatest skill and tact and not until too late may many millions of League supporters discover that they are irretrievably committed to the "balance of power" politics of 1913, with its inevitable resultant catastrophe. Here then is an issue upon which the whole peace movement and peace conscience can and must combine for action, whatever individual party loyalties, and irrespective of differences between sanctionist, pacifist or other ideals. Every citizen should be informed that his country having signed the Pact of Paris renouncing war as an instrument of national policy, refusal to take part in any armed conflict in contravention of that document is a matter of his or her personal honour. Here you can call the bluff of the Imperialists by organising mass resistance not confined to any class, party or creed, in other words mass resistance upon hitherto impossible proportions. The question remains, have the present leaders of the different shades of opinion within the peace movement the vision and courage to close the ranks and throw down the challenge? PHILIP S. MUMFORD

St. Mary's Grange,
Easthorpe, Kelvedon,
Essex.

WOMEN AT CAMBRIDGE

SIR,—The reviewer of Mrs. Hamilton's book on Newnham states that the position of students has changed surprisingly little from the old stiff and restricted days, and goes on to suggest that a college education neither fits women to be human beings nor equips them to earn their livings otherwise than as teachers.

Reviewing and reporting are different trades; but if a reporter were sent to Newnham now he would tell a very different story from this. The fact is that the present day atmosphere of Newnham is thoroughly gay and variegated. The occupations and preoccupations of undergraduates are inextricably intertwined, and the variety of extra-Tripos interests—from Communism to archery—pursued by the men and the women is astonishing. All this may be a wrong preparation for life; but if so, it is wrong for both sexes, for there is nothing left of the segregation and isolation of the women students.

The charge that a university degree does not qualify for work is less obviously untrue. The only occupations which can be entered straight from college are business and administration, and this is true of both sexes. Every other career (even teaching) requires further technical equipment, but the man or woman with a university degree, having obtained this, has a very real advantage in the long run. In the first few years it is not apparent, but when the question of promotion arises it begins to show, and the record of what the old students of Newnham achieve establishes this fact.

Rightly or wrongly Universities still profess to promote learning. The preparation for life and for wage-earning which their students acquire is incidental to the main purpose. Good or bad, efficient or wasteful as the system may be, no one who knows Cambridge to-day can fail to observe that the women's colleges have become acclimatised to it. R. G. STRACHEY,

53 Marsham Street, Chairman, Cambridge University
Westminster, S.W.1. Women's Appointments Board.

SIR,—I read with interest your reviewer's remarks about the position of women in Cambridge, and would like to endorse what he says with examples from my own University, Oxford.

Your reviewer says that women "students are not treated as free and rational adults to anything like the same extent as men are." At Oxford this is perfectly true. At my own College, which is freer than most, we all had to be in at night by 11.15, unless we had a special written permit from the principal; we could not attend any dance without our tutor's permission, and in any case not more than four in one term. Special permission was necessary to act in a play, or to attend mixed parties. Then no alcohol could be consumed on the College premises, we weren't allowed to play tennis on Sunday mornings, we had to wear stockings at meals and hats in the town. Is it surprising that "the atmosphere of a girl's High School still hangs closely about the women's colleges"?

But this is not all. The restrictions I have mentioned are those imposed by the College authorities. There are also the chaperone rules, drawn up and enforced by the proctors. These, if they were not evaded, make it practically impossible for a man to meet a woman undergraduate except at formal tea-parties or dances. They may not punt together unchaperoned or go for motor drives alone, or belong to the same dramatic society or social club. A woman may not visit a man's rooms unchaperoned or attend committee meetings held in his rooms unless another woman is present. Everything that is possible is done to prevent men and women from making friendships or having normal social intercourse.

In 1936 these regulations seem fantastic, yet there is surprisingly little active opposition in Oxford. Women who for the most part come straight from conventional schools tend to accept their inferior status without question, and the few rebel spirits, despairing of ever getting a change, spend their energies chiefly in inventing ingenious ways of evading the rules rather than in organising opinion in favour of their abolition. . . . EVELINE CRALLAN

27 Lansdowne Crescent, W.11.

SIR,—F. B. in his/her review of Mrs. Hamilton's biography of Newnham describes women's colleges to-day as places quite different from the college I am at in Oxford at present. Here freedom certainly is the most characteristic note, for provided a weekly essay is produced no one inquires how we spend our time, and there is no hindrance from going out every evening. We are here not only to get a B.A. to help us get a job, but to increase our knowledge and understanding, so that when we leave we have some time of value to give to other people, whether we become school mistresses, social workers, wives or mothers.

Lady Margaret Hall, UNDERGRADUETTE
Oxford.

THE SCIENTIFIC TREATMENT OF CRIME

SIR,—Your readers are no doubt aware of the work of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency. The Institute exists to deal with those who come into conflict with the law, or are likely to do so, as a result of pathological disorders. The great majority of the cases dealt with are sent to the Institute for report, and, if suitable, for treatment, by magistrates and judges, a growing number of whom recognise the value of its work.

The work of the Institute is done by the devoted band of

doctors who are responsible for its existence, receiving no reward for their services. Its work is sorely constrained by lack of funds, and efforts are now being made to raise £20,000 both for its general purposes and especially to establish an In-patient Hostel, where patients may reside under medical observation. For this purpose a dinner is to be held next Wednesday, March 4th, at Claridge's. Lord Eustace Percy will be in the chair, and speeches will be made by Mr. St. John Hutchison, K.C., Miss Rebecca West, Mrs. Israel Sieff and Dr. Edmund Glover, one of the Directors of the Clinic. Tickets may be obtained, price £2 2s., of the Chairmen of the Dinner Committee, the Countess De La Warr and Mrs. Harry Sacher, at Claridge's Hotel, London, W.

HORDER,
DAWSON OF PENN,
H. G. WELLS,
E. T. JENSEN

Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, 56 Grosvenor Street, W.1.

EXISTENCE

SIR,—May I reply to your correspondent's letter on existing on 4s. a week, as I have to do about the same? I do not find two loaves of bread enough in my case, and I should say a little milk in the cold water to drink. The carrots would be nicer boiled instead of eating them raw; but of course to boil the water would cost too much.

	s.	d.
3 Wholemeal loaves	1	0
½ lb. Margarine		2½
½ lb. Dripping		3
1 lb. Cheese		7
1 lb. Onions		1½
1 lb. Carrots		1½
1 lb. Broken biscuits		4
2 lb. Dates		6
1 tin Evaporated milk		5
10 Oranges		5
	3	11½

7 Lilford Road, London, S.E.5. W. LEACH

WHERE IS HUGENBERG?

SIR,—I notice in your Correspondence column a sensational story is published to the effect that a member of the Reichstag, Herr Hugenberg, rose during the sitting of that body at Nuremburg to oppose the Government measures and was "immediately and literally beaten down amid a great uproar." As I was one of the few Englishmen present as a visitor during the whole of the sitting, it is right that I should deny the truth of that story. No such incident or anything like it took place. J. W. WEIGALL

The Athenæum, S.W.1.

ABORTION FIGURES

SIR,—I feel there is some confusion of the point at issue in the letter you publish. There is no difficulty in the *diagnosis* of a death due to abortion, as this does not depend on voluntary confession . . . under the shadow of imprisonment: moreover the doctor is under no obligation to try and extract a statement from a moribund patient as to whether the abortion is unavoidable (as many fatal cases are) or intentional.

The Registrar-General's abortion deaths have formerly been under two headings: (*a*) diseases due to childbirth and pregnancy, etc., all included in maternal mortality figures; (*b*) deaths due to violence. The only deductions to be drawn from future statistics will be the relative numbers of mothers dying in an abortion or at full term. (It will also tell us, as at present, how many abortion cases are the subject of an inquest.) While figures are of interest, they do not get us far on the road to saving these valuable lives.

Regent's Park, N.W.1. STELLA CHURCHILL

SIN IN RUSSIA

SIR,—My critics, I protest, do me too much honour. Investing me with a mantle of authority which I never donned, they insist upon setting me up as an expert on Russia in order with the greater complacency and effect to knock me down again. Now the world is full of experts on Russia—to some tastes perhaps over-full—and it would be a pity gratuitously to add to their number. For emphatically I am not one of them. Apart from what little information or mis-information a tourist may obtain in a five weeks' visit—and mine is nearly six years old—I know about Russia nothing except what the Webbs tell me. And if what the Webbs tell me is wrong, it really is not my fault. In common with all my acquaintance, I accepted the Webbs' book as an epoch-making work, as accurate as it was authoritative, as detailed as it was comprehensive, in which the truth about Russia was at last disclosed. I made a few extracts from the book relating to matters of individual conduct and drew some obvious deductions. Result: a number of people are very angry and very contemptuous, and, surprisingly, wish to visit their wrath and their contempt upon me. For the Webbs, it seems, if my critics are right, are wrong in their facts.

Let me illustrate this contention by one or two examples taken from Mr. Fischer's article.

Mr. Fischer: "Then, too, there is no Puritanism in Russia."

The Webbs: "There is visible in the summer of 1935 . . . a distinct tendency towards what we can only style puritanism of a rational kind, founded, not on religion, but on hygiene and on economics."

What is puritanism of a rational kind?

The Webbs: "... Definite restriction of eating to something less than the demands of appetite, all become something more than 'self-regarding' lines of conduct, and assume the dignity of social obligations. It is in a similar light that is seen the necessity of prudent self-restraint in every form of enjoyment."

Contrast *Fischer:* "The Bolsheviks . . . want everyone to live well and richly now. The ideal of Bolshevism is not austerity, much less self-denial."

Contrast also Elizabeth Gow in a letter: "The ordinary man is not asked to forgo pleasures which are pursued purely for pleasure's sake."

When we come to details, the contradiction is even more direct.

Thus *Fischer:* "They laughed at the idea of . . . anti-smoking propaganda, except among tender youths."

The Webbs: "Total abstinence from alcoholic drink, and even from smoking, is strongly recommended, and seems to be increasingly common among the Comsomols."

Fischer: "The Bolsheviks want everyone to live well and richly now."

The Webbs: "Even in strict moderation the drinking of vodka is held to be wasteful and detrimental to the wealth of the community."

And so on. . . .

As to going to bed early in rest-houses, I have been brought up to believe that rest-houses are the normal holiday resorts of Russian workers. Where we go to a boarding-house or hotel, they go to rest-houses. In other words, a rest-house is not just a place where you rest after your work; it is also a place where you go for a holiday to enjoy yourself. Yet, whereas Mr. Fischer's friends "laughed at the idea of early bed-time," the Webbs tell us that at the rest-houses there was "no sitting up after 11 p.m." Now on all these points the Webbs may be wrong and Mr. Fischer may be right. But if it is the Webbs who are wrong, why, oh why, is Mr. Fischer so angry with me? It is very hard. I put the Webbs' bowling up to Mr. Fischer to hit, and he hits it. He then ungratefully blames me because he finds it so easy.

Incidentally, however, he misses the point about the expensive dresses. It is not their expensiveness that provoked Mr. Chamberlin's comment, but their arbitrary distribution. Can any and everybody wear them? The answer appears to be No. Most people are too poor to afford them. But can some? Yes. Because they are attached to those who govern Russia. Well and good! Nobody objects to Commissars' wives wearing pretty frocks, but what becomes of the ideal of the equality of economic status and the classless society? C. E. M. JOAD

Hampstead, N.W.3.

Miscellany

HOMAGE TO IBSEN

IN the last eight days I have had the luck to see five plays by Ibsen. He is one of the writers whose stature, like that of a great mountain-range, becomes more apparent as he recedes into the distance. Plays are as a rule pitifully short-lived: what

European dramatist, besides Ibsen, has there been since the seventeenth century, who has written five plays one could enjoy seeing on consecutive nights? Tchehov, Goldoni, perhaps Marivaux and Strindberg—I can think of no others. Of course Ibsen is an unsurpassed technician. But hundreds of very skilful playwrights have been enthusiastically admired in their lifetime, and their technique has not preserved them. During his life Ibsen was usually championed, or attacked, for his "ideas": but he survives, I believe, by force of being a poet.

It seems that in Norway ordinary people believe in trolls, fairies, and all the apparatus (rather meaningless to us) of Northern folk-lore just as widely as the Mediterranean peoples believe in the saints. All Greek poetry is evidence of the value to a poet of an accepted mythology, and the poverty of contemporary poetry is largely due, I suspect, to the absence of any such mythology. (It is significant that Claudel and Yeats, whom I take to be the two most distinguished living poets, depend one upon Catholic, the other upon Celtic, legend.) Ibsen, except in *Peer Gynt*, is rarely explicit in his use of mythology, but he uses the acceptability of the mysterious among his own people, with such delicacy at once and such force of imagination that he imposes upon us also a readiness to believe, or at least to suspend disbelief. It is the poetry implicit in his plays which make them tragedies, not comedies with unhappy endings. Pity, the staple emotion of tragedy, hardly plays a part: the ineffective well-meaning men, who are his so unheroic heroes, excite little but ironical and half-contemptuous commiseration; the women, single-minded and relentless, excite wonder rather than sympathy. They would be absurd if they were not superhuman. There is hardly a character in Ibsen with whom we can identify ourselves, for whom we can feel the pity which is a sublimation of self-pity. Ibsen is the coldest of all the great dramatists.

The poetry only becomes verbally palpable in an occasional flash—"vineleaves in his hair," "white horses," "I want my kingdom," "harps in the air," "the younger generation knocking at the door" (this last phrase sounds prosaic because of the inevitably inadequate translation—I think Ibsen is obviously a great stylist, and Monsieur Suarès, who is hostile to his *Weltanschauung* has indeed compared him with Dante). It is, however, the poetic apprehension of human lives in Ibsen which I wish to emphasise. Let me take the five plays I have just seen in the order of their composition. *The Doll's House* is the least poetical: it might, indeed, be described as two acts of Pinero, and one of propaganda; and it survives, rather as *La Dame aux Camélias* does, chiefly because it provides one of the fattest parts ever written. But even here there is what I would venture to call poetry in the Nora of the last scene: the "squirrel" of the earlier acts is suddenly metamorphosed into Woman Throwing Off Her Chains. The transformation cannot be believed in (though Lydia Lopokova came far nearer to making it convincing than any other actress I have seen in the part), but it is this last scene, not the effective but rather fustian Tarantella, which makes the play imperishable.

Rosmersholm is evidently poetical, the story of a doom. It is a very difficult play to produce and act, nor were the difficulties overcome at Cambridge. The producer never achieved the atmosphere of boding essential to the play, and encouraged or allowed Jean Forbes-Robertson to miss the whole point of Rebecca West. When this bread-and-butter miss revealed herself as another Lady Macbeth (with "ideals," of course), we just did not believe it. Rebecca, it is true, never betrays herself in the earlier acts, but we must feel her to be profoundly disquieting, so that the revelation comes, not like thunder from a clear sky, but as the surprise to be expected in so troubled an air. Miss Forbes-Robertson remained too sweet to the end: Rebecca was broken, ennobled even, but surely never sweetened. The Rosmer was painfully stagey.

The Lady from the Sea is even more poetical than *Rosmersholm*. Unfortunately the producer obscured this fact at the performance I saw (it was a special matinée by the R.D.A. players in London, whereas all four other plays were acted by one company at the Cambridge Arts Theatre). I greatly admire Miss Flora Robson, but she is ill-suited for the part of Ellida—her element is earth not water; moreover, she was harsh where she should have been remote, and inaudible where she should have been mysterious. Nor had the Stranger any of the required strangeness. But what a wonderful and lovely play. Half Tchehov is foreshadowed in the last act (in which Mr. Walter Fitzgerald and Miss Ruth Landa gave beautiful performances) while Ellida and Wangel are among the few characters in Ibsen to excite our sympathy. It is significant that for once Ibsen allows himself to end a play without death. Having roused pity, he can dispense with terror.

Hedda Gabler is a return to realism. But the intensity with which the character of Hedda is imagined gives the play a sort of cruel beauty. She is Emma Bovary metamorphosed to a caged tigress, and if she did not kill herself, she would dwindle into a figure of comedy. It is a magnificent role, and Miss Forbes-Robertson made the most of it, very beautiful and very remote and very baleful. She lacked a certain sensual languor—Hedda is bored as well as restless—and she failed to freeze our blood when she burnt the manuscript. But her performance as a whole had all the necessary grandeur.

The Master Builder is, I think, the most entirely satisfying of all Ibsen's plays, and I cannot imagine a better performance than I saw at Cambridge. The producer took it at Transatlantic speed, a brilliant notion, for the demoniac youthfulness of Hilda seemed to set the literally breakneck pace. In one of the most difficult parts ever written Lydia Lopokova was superlatively good. Her Nora had revealed her as one of the most expressive actresses alive—every emotion ran visibly through her body; indeed, though she never over-acted, the effect became a little exhausting. Her Hilda seemed to me faultless: here was all the ferocity of innocence, the lure of freshness, touching yet lethal. These Ibsen women are all related: if Nora had remained with Torvald she might have flowered monstrously into a Hedda; if she carried out her intended self-education, she might strengthen into a Rebecca. In *The Lady from the Sea* we have already seen Hilda, a budding Hedda, hideously thrilled by the sight of death creeping on Lyngstrand unawares; and in *The Master Builder* she is a Hedda who is the favourite, not the victim, of destiny. Of course, she lacks Hedda's sensuality, but the curiously Freudian business of the tower helps us to recognise in her also the *ewig weibliche*. Though a variety of mutually contradictory morals have been drawn from these plays, none except *The Doll's House* is a *pièce à thèse*. Ibsen uses moral issues as the material of drama, but in his refusal to pass judgment he is comparable only to Shakespeare. His disastrous heroines command a horrified admiration—they have Life, whereas the men show an absence or denial of Life, except of course Solness, whose ardour destroys him.

The company at Cambridge—it comes to London next week—has only one weak member. Mr. Clarke-Smith in each of the four plays gave most remarkable performances. His Rector Kroll, his Dr. Rank, his Judge Brack were admirably differentiated, and his Solness was splendid. Nor could one wish for better or more varied renderings than Mr. Wilfred Grantham gave to Krogstad, Mortensgard, and Dr. Herdal. Mr. Walter Piers made an ideal George Tesman, and Mr. Geoffrey Edwards was excellent in the thankless role of Nora's husband. Miss Betty Hardy as Mrs. Linden and Mrs. Elvsted, Miss Esmé Church as Miss Tesman and Mrs. Helseth, Miss Marjorie Gabain as Aline Solness, and Miss Pauline Vilda as Kaia were all perfectly cast. Indeed I have very rarely seen such an entirely satisfying *ensemble*. Michael Orme produced *The Doll's House*, Irene Hentschel the three others. The period settings and clothing by Motley were ingenious and delightful to look at, though the innovation in the arrangement of the *Rosmersholm* set did not in my opinion justify itself dramatically. Altogether the arrival in London of this carefully selected company gives a superb opportunity for the appreciation of a great genius.

Some ingenuous person who has seen none of these plays

may think that since Ibsen is pessimistic he must be gloomy; so perhaps I had better add that his work is lit throughout by a rich and ironical sense of comedy. RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE GAINSBOROUGH EXHIBITION

EVERY painter is the servant of his legend. For most people I suppose an embarrassingly wistful figure in a virulent blue dress typifies Gainsborough still. Yet if a one-man show of any English painter were to run concurrently with the Chinese exhibition, there can be no question Gainsborough is the man for it. A winter spent in staring at the brushwork of colourless illustrations to an unfamiliar literature must have revealed to many for the first time the aesthetic factor in all its starkness. As far as our culture is concerned, the art of our past has always been produced by the application of the aesthetic faculty to an intelligible ideology. The Chinese exhibition should have inculcated in everyone who saw it the capacity for separating one factor from the other without underestimating either. Upon exercise precisely of that faculty does the full enjoyment of Sir Philip Sassoon's Gainsborough exhibition depend.

Vitality and integration—these probably are the qualities the combination of which differentiates Gainsborough as a painter from every one of his English contemporaries. Art in the eighteenth century, landscape painting particularly, connoted the repetition of a string of threadbare concepts. Visual experience was largely second-hand. A grey pyramid suffused with yellow haze was the accepted symbol for a mountain, a dull brown mass for shadow. Claude's atmosphere, Ruisdael's waterfalls, Cuyp's cows, Siberechts' peasants were the landscape painter's stock in trade. He took them for granted rather as we take for granted the circulation of the blood; there was no need to check up on them. Every country house had its Jan Both, and that was what landscape ought to be. Gainsborough doubtless, had he had slighter natural gifts, would have fallen into this same rut. Nervous calligraphy and an intuitive grasp of form (not, as the Sunday critics have suggested, his wife's dog or his brother's steam condenser) ensured that he did not do so. Paintings still-born a century before revived under his touch. Wynants, the meticulous, laboured, stupid Wynants, became positively effervescent. In this exhibition a picture of the late Ipswich period, Mr. Kenneth Clark's *Drinkstone Park*, shows us the astonishing result. It includes all the concomitants of a classical Dutch composition, a waterfall, a peasant, some cows. But what a transformation! The sun makes two uneven tracks across the picture, catching up a white cow and a birch tree at the back, the waterfall in the shaded foreground bubbles ceaselessly, a silver tree-trunk thrusts up its torn yellow extremities to the grey sky. The picture is the nearest thing to alchemy I know in painting. Not that that alone would be enough to make Gainsborough a great landscape painter. The significant thing is that the pictures he painted changed in the ratio of the technique with which he painted them. As his vision became more fluid, the elasticity of his composition increased. Lord Swaythling's *Harvest Waggon* makes even as resourceful a painter as Morland look pretty naive. If Gainsborough began as a sensitised Wynants, he ended as an intellectualised Renoir.

Hazlitt certainly regarded Gainsborough's last works with much the suspicion Renoir's final phase encountered. "Flimsy" was the word he used about them. The generation which called Rubens "Titian's palette" rejected equally these luminous pink hills, these lemon-coloured clouds floating in suave mauve skies. Constable, who went out in rain-storms and swore away in quivering, expletive lumps of paint, represents far more closely what it wanted. Gainsborough was not receptive to nature in her moments of hysteria. He had in a very marked degree the liability of prematurely sensatory thinking, a lack of that unfashionable quality emotional profundity. The more accomplished his landscape becomes, the more conscious is one that though his style has rarely been surpassed as a vehicle for personality, the personality that it conveyed never expanded.

Gainsborough's training in landscape had one major effect upon his portrait-painting. It enabled him to achieve an integration between subject and background which his contemporaries not only did not find, but did not want. It is quite easy to see why the convention which produced *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews*, that miracle of fortuitous felicity, was one which Gainsborough discarded so soon. It is no more a solution of the problems of portrait painting to sacrifice the portrait to the painting than to sacrifice the painting to the portrait. In even the earliest Gainsboroughs—and this is something one cannot say of any other English painter—there is seldom more than an inch of two of painting which is absolutely dead. The enchanting green seat which carries Mrs. Andrews writhes in the sun. The tree behind her claws its way into the ground. Detail in Gainsborough's hands refused to remain inanimate. I doubt if it is possible to claim that Gainsborough's feeling either for morphology or psychology was more unerring or more effortless or more profound than Reynolds'. Two things, however, are sure. That in practically all Gainsborough's works there occur passages—the pink roses by the side of the Duchess of Hamilton, the turquoise spots in the *Market Cart*, the ribbons in Mrs. Hallett's hat—Reynolds never could have dreamt of. And that while Reynolds, the centre of a medley of influences, pursued aesthetically a rigid and rather static course, Gainsborough, moving along to a far greater extent under his own impetus, developed the formal organisation of his portraits in a more real way. I defy any amateur to date a mature Reynolds within a decade. In the case of Gainsborough I defy him to fail to do so.

The exhibition itself could scarcely be better. Selection and hanging are alike ideal. JOHN POPE-HENNESSY

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PLAYS AND PICTURES

"At the Silver Swan," The Palace Theatre

Since songs and dances, solo or in concert, take up much time in a musical play, the authors (two heads, or more, are held to be better than one) are compelled to develop a plot which tradition decrees must be extremely complicated in the most cursory fashion. Who cares how they do their difficult and ungrateful job as long as they are quick about it? Only a few professional critics, who can always be relied on to complain that it has been very badly done, and that the cast have been left to make bricks without straw. As this feat is one of the attractions of musical comedy, the complaint appears to be unreasonable. The feat is accomplished with exceptional adroitness in *At the Silver Swan*. Left strawless, not only by the authors of the book, but with less excuse by the composers of the music, the ever-fresh, ever-young, ever-alluring Delysia produces brick after brick with the ease acquired by long practice, sings songs, naughty and sentimental, with that gusto which warms the coldest audience to enthusiasm, makes a charmingly urbane figure of the French actress whose appearance in a small-town hotel in Australia in the seventies needs, and gets, a lot of explanation. The brainy buffoonery of Steve Geray and Magda Kun, comedians, delicate in their methods and broad in their effects, passes the time pleasantly when Delysia is absent. They have been provided with the one song in the show, "Boomerang," which has any musical interest. The two other features of *At the Silver Swan* I recall with gratitude are an amusing topsyturvyfication of the Apache dance by two acrobats, Lucienne and Ashour, and the scenery and costumes designed by Miss Doris Zinkeisen, which demonstrate the truth that all's fish that comes to the net of the artist, even bustles and bushrangers. Mr. Bruce Carfax makes a personable hero, and sings well, but waves his arms about with far too much zeal.

"After October," at the Arts Theatre

Everyone is saying that Mr. Rodney Ackland writes in the Tchehovian atmosphere; well! a lot of people write in the T. S. Eliot strain and it has always seemed a pity that no proverb exists: "A writer is known by the bastards he produces." Tchehov, besides making you feel that curious melancholy always produced by life in a climate of eternal white, set off by the feverish clamour for colour, which such monotony engenders, by his delicate understanding of the reaction of character on emotion and his acute sense of dramatic irony can dispense with the ordinary overtones of the footlights. Mr. Ackland has no such power, and while his dialogue is often admirable, and the idea of the routine jumping through hoops of a family who exist on Mr. Micawber's regime is quite a good one, the working out of the detail is too uneven to make it dramatically effective. The play could be much improved by better production and no one could be expected to bring off the "recherche des chansons du temps perdus" for which Miss Mary Clare is called upon. The young author is well-drawn and beautifully played by Mr. Griffith Jones except for an occasional loudness of voice; in one short scene with his mother, when he was called on to abandon his hard up-to-date manner, his gesture and expression were most moving. The best part in the play is his mordant outcast friend, Mr. Nashcliffe, brilliantly sketched in by Mr. Peter Godfrey. The only really natural character is the maid-of-all work, in which Miss Merle Tottenham gave an admirable performance.

"Bonne Chance" at the Curzon
Lumière's Films at the Polytechnic

Every smart French film contains a shot of a white Renault tourer flashing down a long, straight road lined with poplars. In this delightful first film written by, and starring, Sacha Guitry, as we watch the fleeting scenery over the bonnet of a car, his affable voice comments: "C'est comme au cinéma"; and one happy moment finds us by the roadside when Claude and Marie (Sacha and Mdlle. Jeanne Delubac) rush towards us and away into the distance, tossing a snatch of conversation to the wind as they go by. The sound-track and the film are here expertly mated, for we have learned, in one sunny and economical flash, that they are enjoying a gay, platonic holiday together. The information has been naturally and prettily conveyed. *Bonne Chance* has its duller patches, but it makes up for them, achieving *finesse* in place of slickness, thanks to Guitry's virtuosity, his flair for sophisticated clowning. That much one had perhaps expected; but not this grasp of modern film-method which Guitry's own direction more than once displays. We tend continually to underestimate the cinema's debt to France. Last week the Polytechnic held a celebration in honour of the man who forty years ago first presented "living pictures" to the British public: M. Louis Lumière. Examples of his clear and steady cinematography were shown in an excellent programme demonstrating the earliest and latest development of the film, from the first remarkable news reels to a recent splash of Technicolor. Mr. Cecil Hepworth's admirable commentary and a glimpse of Mary Pickford in her first film helped to improve this luminous hour of the past.

"Three Men on a Horse," Wyndhams

Charlie, if he could have seen this play, would have called it a natural, and Charlie with his bowler hat crammed on to his cauliflower ears stands for all that vivid raw world of the Bronx, in which he and his racing pals moved. Poor little "Oinest" from Ozone heights with his sixth sense, which told him what the names of the winners were, was soon engulfed in the capacious maw of the third-rate hotel in which the gang lived, and all his struggles to get back to his office at forty dollars a week and the writing of his triolets for *Mother's Day* were completely unavailing. Like all American plays of this type, each character is subtly differentiated and clear-cut, and like all American casts of the kind, superbly acted. But the play must centre on "Oinest." Mr. Romney Brent, rightly playing him as a serious character, brings enormous charm to the part. Slightly pathetic, extremely bewildered, clinging desperately to his glutinous verse-making, Mr. Brent holds us fascinated by his struggle after rectitude, while the contrasting rich humour of the tipsters sets an admirable foil to his delicate portrait. The play is deftly constructed and produced with that slick ease of manner and impression of fast tempo which leave all English presentations of the kind far behind. It is full of wisecracks and not a few witty lines, and "Oinest" should be able to rest on this winner for a long time. The printing of a glossary in the programme was quite unnecessary, and assumed an ignorance of America, which Londoners, fed on the *New Yorker*, *Esquire* and *Ballyhoo*, can afford to despise.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, February 28th—
Busch Quartet, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

SATURDAY, February 29th—
The Education Bill. Public Demonstration. Speeches by Rt. Hon. H. B. Lees-Smith, Prof. R. H. Tawney, Lady Ernest Simon and others, Central Hall, Westminster, 3.
Lener Quartet, Grotrian Hall, 3.

SUNDAY, March 1st—
Prof. J. C. Flugel on "A Mad World, My Masters," Conway Hall, 11.
North London Film Society "Amok," Monseigneur Cinema, 2.15.
Cortot. Schumann-Chopin Recital, Palladium, 3.15.
Kingsley Martin on "The Truth about the Press," Marx House, Clerkenwell Green, 7.30.
Prof. Catlin on "The Future of Democracy," 123 Lupus Street, 8.
"Cold Comfort Farm," Arts Theatre.

MONDAY, March 2nd—
Lord Phillimore on "Housing in Relation to Employment," Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, 8.
"A Doll's House," Criterion Theatre.
Dance Recital, La Meri, Savoy Theatre.

TUESDAY, March 3rd—
Miss Vera Brittain on "The Morals of Youth To-day and Yesterday," Conway Hall, 7.
Sir Norman Angell on "The Problem of Peace," 36 Tavistock Place, 8.
A. K. C. Ottaway on "Sex in Schools," Transport Hall, 8.
Sir Ernest Simon on "Housing the Community," Lecture Hall, R.I.B.A., Portland Place, 8.15.

WEDNESDAY, March 4th—
Arthur Watts Memorial Exhibition of Original Drawings. Fine Art Society, Bond Street, 3.30.
Mary Field on "Educational Films," 36 Tavistock Place, 8.
Sir Norman Angell on "Can We Get Common Action against War?" Conway Hall, 8.

THURSDAY, March 5th—
H. Finer on "Government by Propaganda—Italy," Livingstone Hall, 8.
Horowitz. Chopin Recital, Queen's Hall, 8.30.
"Rosmersholm," Criterion Theatre.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

REVIEWS are fingerposts to tell busy people which books not to miss and which not to waste time over. Such is the view of the publishers, the authors and the public that really wants to read books at all, though it is not usually that of the reviewer, who regards the review as a little gem of literary art, flashing with intelligence, and existing for its own sake, or as an amusing column to be squeezed in somehow in the interests of culture. I think that the review should be a fingerpost, since even my own little gems strike me as being bits of coloured glass and more often than not I am inclined to grunt swinishly over other people's pearls. The reviewer should exist to help the reader to find the books he will like and not to distract him. He is a matrimonial agent or a pander, and as such it is bad taste in him to try to call attention to his own attractions. Unfortunately, during the last year, the quality of books published has been so unusually bad that it has been difficult to find many that one could honestly and simply recommend. Thus, all too often, one is forced to poke fun. This week, for a change, I have a book to review that will interest almost everybody and excite all but the most pernickety imaginations. I should like to head this page with the little fingerpost one finds in foreign time-tables, pointing thus: ☛ *Siamese White*, by Maurice Collis (Faber, 15s.). It is a fascinating piece of history and I most strongly advise everyone to buy or borrow the book at once. That is all I really have to say this week.

* * *

However, to continue: The title, and the book jacket, with gentlemen in Georgian wigs, will give a totally misleading impression to many. *Siamese White* is an account of Samuel White, who, born under the Commonwealth the son of a Bristol merchant, went out East in his early twenties, proceeded from India to Siam and began to lay hold of a fortune as fast as possible in any way he could. Mr. Maurice Collis is a member of the Indian Civil Service and as such was sent to conduct the administration at Mergui, a small port now in the extreme south of Burma but which in the seventeenth century belonged to Siam. Mergui was the scene of Samuel White's operations, and his memory has not been totally forgotten. Mr. Collis became interested, collected what he could locally, and has now dug up the whole story from the India Office files, and this volume is the fruit of his research. The subject is pure baroque but, fortunately, it has not fallen into the hands of a writer anxious to exploit its possibilities. Mr. Collis's pen does not run naturally to glowing descriptive catalogues or to irrelevant purple patches. He has instead exactly what is wanted: the gift of telling an extremely intricate story with perfect clarity, and he writes also with obvious delight at having such a good story to tell. He knows and loves Mergui, he knows the people and can explain which different factions were struggling for power and the internal politics of Siam which made it possible for such an adventurer to gain power. And since he knows the background so well, Mr. Collis is able to tell the story without taking sides, though many readers, with a touch of the pirate in them, will feel a feverish anxiety lest White should fail to keep hold of this loot and transport it back, in face of enormous dangers, to respectability and England.

* * *

Mergui, which Mr. Collis describes as being one of the most attractive places nowadays, was then a port of real importance filled with a mixed population of Burmese, Siamese, Malays, Hindus, Indian Moslems, Arabs, English, Portuguese and other Europeans. Chinese and Japanese goods going West, and Indian and European goods going East, went through Mergui, being carried overland across the Malay peninsula instead of going several thousand miles round through the straits by Singapore. White got into control at Mergui, levying customs and confiscating them. He built a number of excellent ships for the King of Siam and sent them out with English renegade captains to wage unauthorised war on Golconda and other Indian kingdoms, seizing and looting ships and trading as far as the Persian Gulf. He was in a desperate hurry as he knew that at any time the Siamese might call him to account, or the East India Company might send an expedition against him, in which case he would have to choose between permanent exile and being hanged as a pirate. The thought that he would lose the vast fortune he was grabbing and that he would not be able to get it back safely and end as a landed gentleman in the West of England, almost drove him insane with fury. Somehow or other he would play one party off against another, and fight, or threaten, or bluff, or bribe his way back, taking his wealth with him and enough papers, genuine or forged, to save his fortune and his neck. He spent a great deal of time and trouble getting his books in order; wild drinking bouts were followed by mornings instructing his secretary to make fraudulent entries of sums expended in building a non-existent fort, the garrison of which would naturally consume rations and have a large pay roll. And for month after month he racked his brains to obtain a document authorising or ordering his piratical depredations from the King of Siam, who was completely unaware that an obscure English harbour-master in his service had declared war in his name on some of the mightiest kingdoms in the East.

* * *

This is exciting enough—but behind White was a figure far more romantic and extraordinary. This was the Lord Phaulkon, a young, handsome, extremely intelligent, completely unscrupulous, well-educated Greek. After visiting England as a youth, he had made his way to Siam with White's elder brother, and by suggesting a new policy that would counteract the powers of the Moslems had been created a mandarin and had risen to holding absolute power under a feeble and inactive monarch. Phaulkon lived in Ayudhya, a city of astonishing beauty, as large as London, built on an island with stone walls six miles in circumference, the main streets broad and straight with canals running beside them, in which the King's palace was like a town apart with many of the buildings and towers entirely gilded. Phaulkon himself lived in a magnificent palace with a beautiful Japanese wife and corresponded with Louis XIV. His policy was to drive out the East India Company, who were too commercial in their outlook and grudged the expense of forts and soldiers, and to call in French soldiers and expert advisers. He sent a delegation to France which was received with great excitement. But Phaulkon was an old friend of White's elder brother, he liked White and protected him, though it is doubtful whether he would have done so had he known all that White was up to. And in any case Phaulkon was in a position of extreme danger. A horrible death after abominable tortures awaited him. White had the sense to realise the position.

* * *

It is interesting to compare this account of one of the early English renegades in the East with Trelawny's romantic would-be autobiography *The Adventures of a Younger Son*, also a delightful book in its way. The setting is surprisingly the same. A Byronic English renegade wages war upon the Company's ships in a French privateer, but Trelawny, who in real life despised money, could only be a pirate for the mere love of it—a noble corsair whose scoundrelly actions are covered with talk of liberty and the hero Washington, etc. For this reason, if for no other, *The Younger Son* is a boy's book and we find it difficult to believe in his adventures, though they are never half so strange as the events leading up to the final massacre at Mergui. We are like a jury of honest men who can only believe in anything when we are given a low motive for it. Trelawny's only low motive was vanity, and we cannot help feeling that what he does is unreal and amateurish. Conrad was so convincing because he under-

Important

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Messrs. Victor Gollancz have organised and will shortly launch *The Left Book Club*, for the service of those who desire to play an intelligent part in the struggle *for* World Peace and a better social and economic order, and *against* Fascism.

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HOW THE CLUB WILL WORK

For each month a book will be selected from among the books of this nature to be published by Messrs. Gollancz during that month. A special edition of the selected book, bound in stiff paper boards, will be sent to members of the Club on the day of publication at the price of 2/6, plus cost of postage. The ordinary edition for the general public for each such selected book will not be less than 5/-: and when it is borne in mind that it may well be a book (as explained above) that is normally issued at anything from 7/6 to 25/-, the advantage of membership is apparent.

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The selectors will be Professor H. J. Laski, Mr. John Strachey, and Mr. Victor Gollancz.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE

The selected books will *not* be reprints: each book will be a book never before published, and the special edition will reach members of the Club simultaneously with the first appearance of the ordinary edition in the bookshops.

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Membership (for which there is no fee of any kind) may be taken up either (& preferably) with your regular bookseller, or with the publishers. If you are interested, send a post card *now* to Victor Gollancz Ltd., 14 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London; you will then receive full particulars.

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We shall be issuing monthly in connection with the Club a circular or brochure to be entitled "Left Book News." This brochure will contain full particulars and descriptions not only of the selected book but of all Gollancz publications of the month in this category (and allied categories—for instance, penal reform, slum clearance, modern educational methods): together with reminders of books already published, the history of recent publications, and advance information about future plans.

While we shall not undertake to give information about any but Gollancz books, we shall hope to include notes about outstanding books in this category issued or to be issued by other publishers.

[*Continued in next col.*

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While members of the Club will automatically receive *The Left Book News*, you don't have to be a member to receive it: all you have to do is to send a post card direct to Victor Gollancz Ltd., 14 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, saying that you wish to receive *The Left Book News* monthly. You will then duly receive it, without charge, and post free. If you are interested, write *now* and ask us to send you the "News," *even if you are already on our mailing lists.*

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VICTOR GOLLANCZ LIMITED

Announcement

(C) THE BOOKS THEMSELVES

We now give the titles of some of the books which we have issued this month and last, and which we shall be issuing during the present year:

World Politics 1918-1935 BY R. PALME DUTT, the celebrated editor of the Labour Monthly: *The Fate of the Middle Classes* BY ALEC BROWNE —answering the questions, how are the middle classes faring today, how are they likely to fare as the situation develops, what course of action should they take: *The Private Manufacture of Armaments* BY P. NOEL BAKER — the most important examination of this question yet undertaken: *Poverty and Public Health* BY THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH OF STOCKTON-ON-TEES AND J. KIRBY, M.R.S.I. — showing that a considerable proportion of the population is subsisting below the safety line of adequate nutrition: *The Citizen Faces War* BY R. & B. DONINGTON, with Introduction by Sir Norman Angell — which inquires what each one of us should do in face of the growing crisis, and which Lord Allen has described as infinitely better than any book on the subject that has been written: *I Lived in a Slum* BY MRS. CECIL CHESTERTON — an indictment of our housing conditions from first-hand knowledge, described by Professor Laski as a book that ought to be read by everyone that has a fragment of civic conscience: *The Socialisation of the Iron and Steel Industry*—giving a detailed scheme for the actual conduct of the industry under socialism: *Hitler the Pawn* BY RUDOLF OLDEN—which we believe to be the first full biography of the Dictator: *The War Against the West* BY AUREL KOLNAI—a fundamental examination of Nazi philosophy: *The Fight Against Fascism in France* BY THOREZ, Secretary of the Communist Party of France—explaining the origin, achievements, and perspectives of the United Front: *The U.S.S.R. Handbook*—a reasonably complete encyclopaedia of everything about the U.S.S.R:

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Anti-Semitism Historically and Critically Examined BY PROF. VALENTIN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UPSALA—at once sane and comprehensive: *Dialectical Materialism: A Critical Study* BY PROF. H. LEVY—which we hope will prove to be the first really good book on the subject in English: *From Hegel to Marx* BY PROF. SIDNEY HOOK OF NEW YORK UNIVERSITY—a series of historical studies on the development of Marxist thought in relation to that of his predecessors and contemporaries, on which nothing in English so far exists: *Europe under the Terror* BY JOHN L. SPIVAK—extracts from which have been creating such a stir in the "Daily Herald": *Communism for Britain and America* BY JOHN STRACHEY—answering the question, what is there, *for us*, to put in the place of Capitalism: *Approach to Communism* BY STEPHEN SPENDER—in which a famous poet explains how he is approaching the Communist point of view: *Walls Have Mouths* BY W. F. R. MACARTNEY (with prologue and epilogue by Compton Mackenzie) in which we are told something of our prison system by a man who has just completed 8½ years penal servitude: *Changing Man: The Soviet Education System* BY BEATRICE KING, Chairman of the Education Section of the S.C.R.—the first full account of the Soviet education system: *Freud and Marx* BY R. OSBORN—described by John Strachey as "profoundly original and stimulating, breaking into a whole new world of fruitful investigation": *China's Millions* BY ANNA LOUISE STRONG—in which she tells of her experiences in China during the Revolution and the reaction of 1927, and brings the whole story up to 1935: *Three Plays* BY CLIFFORD ODETS—just described on the front page of the "Times Lit. Supp." as "the outstanding playwright of the movement—one might almost say of the moment": etc., etc., etc.

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stood low motives and explained them, and White is the kind of hero that only Conrad could have invented. The whole explosive setting, with the furious man drinking and raging, flattering and threatening, desperately trying to get clear with his enormous plunder to his daughters before his mysterious Greek ally finds he is leaving him in the lurch—that is pure Conrad. That White really lived is like a testimonial to Conrad from the Muse of History and shows how tremendously the Malay peninsula and the character of Englishmen had impressed his imagination, and with what extraordinary truth he could create them. If Trelawny ever was a buccaneer, he was too wrapped up in himself to understand anyone else. Most of us, unfortunately, have more of White than of Trelawny in us.

DAVID GARNETT

SMUTS

General Smuts. By S. G. MILLIN. *Faber and Faber.* 18*s.*
A History of South Africa. By ERIC A. WALKER. *Reissue with extensive additions. Longmans.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

General Smuts, fair game for the novelist-biographer, has inspired Mrs. Millin to give us a book at once highly readable and admirably detached. But the drama of her hero's career as man of action did not need heightening by breathless rhetorical questions and anacolutha. Indeed, the poetically conceived inversions read sometimes like exercises in the South African accent; Smuts himself can rise to eloquence, but here his style, born of his masterly bilingualism, is often parodied; and we might have been spared a few cynical disquisitions in Mrs. Millin's own vein. It happens also that of the places said to illustrate the Boers' use of scriptural names—"Elim and Hebron, Bethel, Bethlehem and Bethesda"—half or more began not as Boer dorps but as mission stations. And Mrs. Smuts is not "descended from the Voortrekkers."

But Smuts as a character comes to life, even if the exposition of his philosophy is too slight always to reveal the mainspring of his multifarious activities. "Why not?" he asks, "It is all—from science to soldiering—a matter of thinking." As a friendly enemy has said, this confident versatility was to be expected from a "first-class brain in a third-class country"; but he has paid the penalty of his inevitable isolation from the criticism of equals. His fellow South Africans commonly find him aloof, intellectually cold and hard, and they often cruelly misunderstand him.

There are many grim episodes. The execution of Fourie, a Defence Force officer caught in rebellion in 1915, was logical; but coming on top of the high-handed deportation of the Labour leaders in 1914 it cost Smuts dear. It "ruined him politically," as he knew it would. There was no cold calculation of political advantage—"It was my duty." But neither then nor later did he show profound political understanding. Of his forceful handling of the great outbreak in 1922 he writes: "The whole country was at stake. It would have gone Bolshevik . . ." I was in touch with the Trade Unions at the time. Two or three adventurers were in fact preaching up a Workers' Republic and sapped the men's allegiance to the orthodox Trade Unions. But the only Republic the masses were thinking of was the same whose flag, the *Vierkleur*, Mrs. Smuts had placed over her bed when her children were born.

Mrs. Millin is disdainful of Smuts' passion for young children. They are perhaps sometimes a foil against acquisitive or merely lionising callers. ("Are those people just visiting or do they want something?") One afternoon at Irene I got little political news, but I did hear him tell a grandchild a story in the homely Afrikaans vernacular. It was about a hunter treed by a lion, and I never want to hear a story better told, with the high dramatic emphasis children love. In fact this charming trait is of the essence of Smuts. He himself has the simplest needs and wants. (His Irene establishment is well described here.) He has always been as unsparing of himself as on campaign he was of his men; and the guard outside headquarters in East Africa normally had early morning coffee from his own hands. But wanting so little himself, he shows little understanding of the needs and feelings of others and cares nothing for things commonly thought important.

With Rhodes, whose mind he has himself called "seminal," he shares a love for the big idea. Next to the Union, and once it was safe, the Commonwealth and the League of Nations are the ideals which really satisfy him. Alone among his fellows he has real feeling for the Greater Africa beyond the Union's borders. But the Boer War made him, and the best of his life work has been unselfishly devoted to repairing the damage then wrought. He has worked with passionate enthusiasm for British-Dutch reconciliation and co-operation; that they may share the "great future" of which he so often speaks. Of dissident Nationalists, Labour cranks, Indians and such like, he is as intolerant as his old enemy Milner. They are an obstruction in the way of greater unity and hardly worth understanding. For the Natives he sees the need of research and experiment, but deeds should wait. The achievement of Anglo-Boer co-operation up till now has therefore been a good deal at their expense. They are not so much as indexed in this book.

The private material made available by the Smuts family gives us some new historical side-lights. But at some difficult points Mrs. Millin appears to accept as final what Smuts wrote or thought in the thick of the battle, for example about Milner. Poor Milner is the villain of the piece, the sole maker of the Boer War. I have heard a Boer leader judge more charitably that the immediate cause was the weather! The heat of Pretoria in the weeks before the rains got their nerves on edge and precipitated the October ultimatum. But Milner (with ideas not so unlike those Mrs. Millin admires in Smuts) galled the Boers, so that even some of the best of them forget the efficient work of reconstruction done by him and his Kindergarten, remembering only the haughty manner of it, and the Oxford accent. Nor was Smuts quite alone in the Closer Union movement. None would belittle his share; but the unpopular Kindergarten did not a little of the hard spade work. Again, he himself would never subscribe to the ungenerous estimate of Mr. J. X. Merriman, the Cape Prime Minister, as nothing more in the Union Parliament than "a long, thin, stooping, fading, shadowy old man." Half an hour of that fine old Whig's invective would be refreshing music on the Native Bills, and might have been efficacious.

Opportunely, Mrs. Millin's history being highly impressionist, Professor E. A. Walker's Standard *History* has just appeared in a second edition. He leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions, if he can. But the facts are there, in battalions, and well authenticated. A supplementary chapter covers the years since 1924 and should serve as a background to Mrs. Millin's second volume, which will be welcome in the autumn.

W. M. MACMILLAN

NEW NOVELS

The Marchesa and Other Stories. By K. SWINSTEAD-SMITH. *Hogarth Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
The Pumpkin Coach. By LEWIS PAUL. *Heinemanns.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Family Curse. By JOHN HAMPSON. *Chapman and Hall.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Jackets Green. By PATRICK MULLOY. *Grayson.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Rococo Coffin. By RICHARD BLAKE BROWN. *The Fortune Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
This My Hand. By CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL. *Hamish Hamilton.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Having mentioned a few don'ts for novelists a fortnight ago, it was not surprising to meet a novelist who had been concocting a few don'ts for reviewers. The first was "Don't mention *The Postman always rings twice* again. It occurs in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION regularly every week." This is a serious charge. *The P.M. always rings seven hundred times*, as we few in the inner ring of weekly journalism call it, is obviously mentioned far too much. The trouble is that there is at present no other name for the kind of novel which it represents—it was not the first of that kind, nor the best of that kind, but it happened to be the first to have a big success in England. It is a bad title, even for a book, let alone for a school, for postmen proverbially knock rather than ring, nor do they knock with a long interval in between, as does fate in the novel. An alternative is to mention Hemingway too much, for the P.M. school derives from the short stories of Hemingway, especially those with American subjects, where the hero represents what Lewis calls "the dumb ox," a young man conspicuous for courage, helplessness, facetiousness, sentimentality and a kind of amorous integrity. The only result of this is to put people off Hemingway, who is, after all a great verbal artist, and a person with a much larger range and vocabulary than the imitators who have borrowed his method.

And what about Miss Stein, whose Melanctha story in *Three Lives* (the Dumb Cow, I suppose Lewis would call it) so influenced Anderson and Hemingway?

There is another way of approaching these books. Scott Fitzgerald, writing of the time of his nervous breakdown, says:

> I saw that the novel, which at my maturity was the strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought from one human being to another, was becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art that was capable of reflecting only the tritest thought, the most obvious emotion. . . . As long past as 1930, I had a hunch that the talkies would make even the best-selling novelist as archaic as silent pictures.

Such books as *The Postman*, in fact, are talkie-novels; for that reason they are immensely readable, short, dramatic, packed with dialogue, and empty of any idea or opinion that cannot be expressed in colloquial speech. Other novels may be described in terms of music, like Proust, or painting, as Flaubert and Firbank have described books of their own, but these American novels, often so indifferent, yet written always with an economy which spoils one's appreciation of verbose English efforts, are often so Hollywoodian that one cannot remember if one has seen them, or read them. *Murder Man*, was that a film or a book? So, in future, the phrase talkie-novel will be used here to mean books like *The Postman always* . . . unless anybody can think of a better. Of course, I do not agree with Fitzgerald that the talkies have killed the novel, any more than they have killed poetry. They may have limited a little its circle of expansion, but the talkie-novel, on the other hand, has killed much slip-shod, pretentious and moribund writing, and may have made us impatient of some that is good in the process.

The other objection raised to me was that the reviewer has too much power, he can dismiss in a line a book that it has taken six months to write, and he can even admit, in certain papers, that he has not read it. This is based on a misconception, for during six months the novelist has spent on his novel, the reviewer has to read about a hundred and eighty novels, and they must all be taken into account, and their effect on him, when the one line of superior criticism comes to be written. He may even have already read and reviewed several novels exactly like the one in question. As to whether he will have read the book there is much difference of opinion. There is a fiction that reviewers always read the books they review, and that to catch them out in ignorance of something in the book is to utterly discredit them. This dates from the time when learned books were reviewed by learned men, and to make a mistake was to prove your ignorance. But novels are not learned books, if they are bad on one page they will seldom be good on the next, and to have missed out something in the middle will not make much difference to one's appreciation of the book, as if it was a long unbroken train of mathematical argument. A novel-reviewer is a high-class taster, he rolls a few pages of a novel round his mouth, spits them out, and waits for the famous aftertaste to crown his enjoyment of the flavour and the bouquet. If all three are absent he does not continue to swill the remainder of the bottle. In practice, however, he can always put up a good fight about any novel, for there is a way of reading with one's eyes fixed on the page and one's fingers automatically turning them over that does not exclude a delightful procession of images from passing behind the retina; winning lottery tickets, eccentric wills, old Palladian houses going for a song, adoring young admirers, warm beaches meticulously lapped by a tepid sea, southern capitals, and spirit voices that cry "but surely, Connolly, you with your millions . . ." Reviewers have too much power, indeed; when even an unfriendly one-line review is immediately wiped out by a paean of praise from another paper! Perhaps they have power in so much that a novelist who has been unfavourably reviewed has little chance of getting the verdict reversed, though sometimes they can do much to mitigate it. If you can remember a review of Mr. Jarrard Tickell's *See How They Run* in these pages, you will agree it was unappreciative, yet he has scored neatly by inserting, in a full-page advertisement of the book in a news magazine, "the Daily So-and-So praised it, the Evening Such-and-Such was enthusiastic, the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION devoted a column to quotation." If only Mr. Tickell could write as well as he can advertise! No, reviewing is a whole-time job with a half-time salary, a job in which one's best work is always submerged in the criticism of someone else's, where all triumphs are ephemeral and only the drudgery is permanent, and where nothing is secure or certain except the certainty of turning into a hack. Who would not rather be the worst novelist than the best reviewer, and make a novel, from November to April, out of the excesses which he had committed in October and May?

**The Marchesa* is a first book. Miss Smith's stories reminded me of Peter Chamberlain's—that is to say, there seems a conflict in her stories between those which are promising, and something more than promising, and those which are readable, saleable, and slick. Both kinds are entertaining, and I recommend *The Marchesa* to everyone who enjoys quiet, observant, subacid writing. *Cruelty to Animals* in particular I thought first-rate, and *Pas de Trois* deals movingly with a sultry subject. The Calabrian stories form an original setting for much of the book, but the shorter *genre* stories seem more in the nature of magazine experiments—but Miss Swinstead-Smith is worth reading and worth watching.

The Pumpkin Coach is the first novel of a young American writer who wrote an admirable prize-winning short story, *No More Trouble for Jedwick*. It is the story of a noble savage, a young Samoan who comes to San Francisco and, eventually, New York, full of ideals and dreams about Western civilisation. It is not at all pure satire, but a romantic attempt to see America through Polynesian eyes so as to heighten the colour, brutality and freshness of it. I don't think it comes off, because Mr. Paul's novel is, like many another first novel, altogether too crowded, over-written, whimsical, and undigested. There are journalists, painters, poets, art-galleries, concerts, left-wing meetings and prize fights in the book, which is not written in talkie-English but in a crowded academic style, and you might enjoy taking a look at it. I should say Mr. Paul was worth watching only.

**Family Curse* is a large canvas in which the central figure is an old lady on her death-bed round which are grouped her four married sons and married daughter, her servants and doctor, and youngest son, Johnny. It is a rich, dark Midland interior in a suburb of Birmingham, and we are given, as each figure is painted on, a detailed account of his or her childhood and married happiness and general response to the old lady's matriarchal autocracy. It is a readable book, if somewhat slow and repetitive, and contrives to bring to life a group of rather lifeless, out-of-the-ordinary yet conventional bourgeois characters. I thought the most

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successful pictures were those of Johnny, who was queer, and whose queerness is very well described, and of Nellie, the old servant. It is a gruesome deathbed and I would not call this an escapist's novel, but I can recommend it.

Jackets Green is an eye-witness novel of the struggle between Black-and-Tans and I.R.A. in Ireland, of the life in the concentration camps to which the young Sinn Feiners were sent, and of their ultimate release only to get embroiled at once in the civil war between the I.R.A. and the Free Staters. It is a piece of honest reporting of a great many commonplace conversations and trifling incidents, but serves to remind one of unhappy and not-so-far-off things which the English have forgotten too quickly and the Irish will remember too long.

Rococo Coffin is a thriller by a disciple of Firbank. He has gone out of his way to fabricate an unusual plot and some of his jokes are funny, but the novel is too dream-like and tortuous to carry one along with it, and a thriller which does not grip one, as the blurb writers say, is hopeless.

**This My Hand* is a psychological murder story. It is not, as they usually are, about the crafty, self-deceiving kind of murderer, but the study of a man of violence who always considered himself perfectly conventional, and whose murders grow out of the necessities of his own nature, and of those women who are instinctively drawn to him. It is a brilliant book and might have been written by a gifted psychiatrist; it is consistently deep, concise and exciting and ends with a description of the scaffold and the condemned cell which all admirers of capital punishment will enjoy.

CYRIL CONNOLLY

GENGHIS KHAN

Genghis Khan. By RALPH FOX. *Lane.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

For centuries a symbol of barbarous cruelty and wanton destruction, Genghis Khan is now extolled by historians as one of the major benefactors of modern civilisation: by imposing order from Pekin to the Caucasus, he reopened between China and the West a road along which travelled commerce and ideas—including three inventions which made possible the Renaissance—printing, gunpowder and the compass. The two views of Genghis are less contradictory than they seem. Though not so cruel as a Tamburlaine, he seems to have been more pitiless than the ordinary members of his savage people. One of his earliest recorded actions was the murder of his half-brother; and in the great cities of Khorasan, like Merv and Balk, he did not leave a man alive or a house standing. Passing near the site of one of them, a Chinese sage was surprised that there were still dogs alive to bark among the ruins. Once Genghis asked a Moslem saint "Will not a mighty name remain behind me?" and the Imam (having first very wisely made the Khan promise not to kill him) answered: "A name endures only where there are people." Genghis is now acclaimed as one of the first Free Traders. Already Gibbon applauded the tolerence he gave to all religions, and compared his principles with those of Locke. He now appears to be also a prototype of Adam Smith. Here is this philosophical ruler's view of the *summum bonum*:

> The pleasure and joy of man lies in treading down the rebel and conquering the enemy, in tearing him up by the root, in taking from him all that he has, in making his servants wail so that tears flow from the eyes and nose, in riding pleasantly upon his well-fed geldings, in making one's bed a litter upon the belly and the navel of his wives, in loving their rosy cheeks, in kissing and sucking their scarlet lips.

He had forced his way to power through poverty, humiliation and constant danger. His mother and his wife were both seized and raped by neighbouring clans. He hardly knew a month's repose in his life. As soon as he had captured Pekin, he had to prepare the campaign forced on him by the Khwarizmian Empire in the West; and he was fighting to the East again when he died, in the year 1227. He was a soldier of genius, and whether he could ever have resigned himself to peace is uncertain. A just estimate of his historical importance must depend upon weighing the havoc he inflicted upon the Chinese and Islamic civilizations, against the beneficent results of the contacts he made possible between East and West.

Mr. Ralph Fox has written the best biography of Genghis which has yet appeared. It is based largely on the short life by Professor Vladimirtsof, of which Messrs. Routledge published a translation in 1930. But Mr. Fox has the advantage of his master in imagination, in style and in a rich experience of life in Central Asia. (He wrote a most fascinating novel with this setting, called *Storming Heaven*.) Let me quote, as an example of the skill with which he paints the background of the Khan's life, this description of arriving at the Aral Sea:

> In no part of the world does one get the feeling of land so much as in Central Asia. This way, that way, for many thousands of miles you know there is land, the flat grass steppes, rolling sand-dunes, broken ground of crumbling yellow loess covered with sparse scrub, sometimes in the far distance the lofty and solitary white peaks of mountains floating on the dust clouds, but always land and the feeling of land. All the more astonishing, therefore, when the very existence of the sea has passed from one's mind, to come quite suddenly upon the sea, to ride over a bare clay ridge and have it stretching before you brilliant in the sun, shining like a mirage.

I have had an analogous experience when after months on the arid Persian plateau, with never a tree on its fantastically shaped and metallically coloured mountains, I flew across the snow-capped Elburz and saw suddenly the sub-tropical lushness of the Caspian littoral. Though I never reached further than Teheran on the road to Bokhara, these Asiatic distances leave a longing in the memory and imagination. And Mr. Fox has made most enthralling his Mongols, with their high cheek-bones, their eyes reddened by dust and wind, riding over plains and mountains beneath their horse-tail banners. He is a Communist, but he rarely falls into excess in his "materialist interpretation" of history. He emphasises indeed (and rightly) the help given to Genghis by the Moslem traders, who needed security upon the trade-routes, by the discontented and oppressed subjects of the Kin Empire in Northern China, and by the dissensions of the ruling Khwarizmian family. He calls the Mongols "the armed instrument of the laws of human history" and even tries faintly to maintain that the anarchy in Mongolia consequent upon the destruction of the old clan system was bound to find the unifying ruler which it required. But his enthusiasm obliges him to admit the "genius" of Genghis; and the dissolution of his empire within a century of his death suggests that his dazzling career, though assisted of course by circumstances, depended upon his individual powers and was no more inevitable than the march of Alexander into Asia. The Mongol Empire no doubt answered the nomads' need of imports—their clothes, their household utensils, even their arms had to come from foreign townsmen. But, as Professor Vladimirtsof pointed out, nomadism is an impossible foundation for a civilisation. "In the conquered lands they were absorbed by the more numerous or more civilised nations in whose midst they found themselves; at home they relapsed into the state out of which they had emerged under his leadership." Mr. Fox's attempt to controvert this judgment seems to me unconvincing.

Genghis (or Chingis, as Mr. Fox and the other modern historians more accurately write the word) is a title—the Khan's name was Temujin. And Chingis probably means "Ocean." Is there not a curious poetry in this being the supreme term of honour given by a people hardly any of whom can have known the sea except by rumour, to the emperor who was destined to carry their domination from the Pacific to the Caspian? His conquests were not, as has often been represented, the flooding invasions of an innumerable horde: his armies were smaller than those they defeated. Genghis triumphed by strategy and statesmanship, in fact by intellect. Inspired by sympathy for the modern Sovietic Mongols, Mr. Fox passes too lightly, I think, over the devastation of great cities and the pyramids of skulls. But he has written a most absorbing and remarkable biography.

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boy, I have been reading detective stories for donkey's years, but the old familiar faces of the detectives simply refuse to go. Sometimes it must be sheer decrepitude and old age that prevents these veterans doing themselves justice. More often still they collapse in their prime from overwork, but are yet kept plodding along by their relentless authors to wrestle with clumsy plots and totter to ignominious solutions. So when we note that eight out of the nine books on this list are by seasoned writers it is with some concern we turn the pages to find how some old friends have got through this trying winter; and it is an agreeable surprise to meet most of them as fit as ever. Inspector French has just been given a holiday which he spent abroad, and is now looking forward to another in North Wales. (Sympathetic readers will remember in what wretched health he was when he had to solve *Crime at Guildford*.) Miss Hildegarde Withers is back in the bracing air of Manhattan, which suits her better than the relaxing Cornish Riviera (vide *The Puzzle of the Silver Persian*). Asey Mayo among other superlative endowments which are bestowed on him by Miss Taylor (and which I personally cannot stomach) enjoys an iron constitution and can be trusted to be in his usual fettle on Cape Cod. As for James Greer, he has improved out of all knowledge since Mr. Newton Gayle had the sense to send him on cruises to Puerto Rico. Only Swan has taken a real turn for the worse. Indeed, he has sunk to such depths that it is doubtful whether Mr. Philmore will ever be able to pull him round.

It is no use recommending a book to all comers because it is exciting, since there are monkish people who dislike being disturbed by what they are reading. But *Murder At* 28.10 will put anyone in a fever of suspense if they care for the sensation. A number of people are barricading themselves one evening into a house in the West Indies because of the approach of a hurricane, when James Greer realises that one of the party is extremely likely to be murdered before morning. 28 : 10 is the barometer reading at the time of the crime. The description of the hurricane's gradual approach becomes agonising while we wait for the unknown killer to strike. Mr. Newton Gayle has not only hit on a perfect novelty in the way of a setting for a detective story, but he has risen to the occasion and writes better than he ever wrote before; he even documents his hurricane throughout with authentic weather charts supplied by the U.S. Weather Bureau so that the reader can see from hour to hour what is coming his way. To get the very best out of it, one should read the book at night in a country cottage with a rapidly falling barometer.

Mr. Hugh Austin is the only novice on the list, but one would never guess he was a beginner from his slick, confident, American manner. The title of his book, *It Couldn't Be Murder*, is, as a matter of fact, more strictly true than Mr. Austin means it to be, because the two apparently innocent deaths in a New York mansion which Sergeant Quint artfully unmasks on very slender evidence, simply won't pass as murder either—they fall between every stool. Accident, suicide, murder, it couldn't be anything. One would forgive Mr. Austin more easily if he were not so vainglorious, but he apes Mr. Ellery Queen with a grand challenge to the reader on p. 245, and for that there is no excuse. If it were not for this fatal flaw, *It Couldn't Be Murder* would rank very high as an apprentice effort, and warrants good reading for anyone who does not mind a final fit of virtuous indignation.

Mr. Wills Crofts is like the roast beef of old England. He provides the wholesome diet on which our national character depends and *The Loss of the "Jane Vosper"* is another cut from that excellent joint. The *Jane Vosper* is sunk in the Atlantic by an unaccountable explosion, which costs Inspector French three of the busiest weeks of his painstaking career. For those whose memory stretches back as far, the general plan is very like that of *The Pit Prop Syndicate*, which many critics regard as Mr. Wills Crofts' masterpiece.

Mrs. Eyles has turned her practised hand to a crime novel; and it is easy to believe her when she says it was very great fun to write *They Wanted Him Dead*. It is great fun to read, without laying any tax on the intelligence. A tiresome best-seller writer in Sussex is found poisoned one morning at a moment when, by a conjuncture of circumstances, his death seems a godsend to every inmate of his household. The style of writing is that of a novel and not a detective story, and the mystery of the best-seller's death serves merely as an axis round which a bunch of amusing characters revolve. The authoress's attitude to the problems of life is well indicated by her continual references to the "messiness" of sexual intercourse, for which the only remedy comes from a "tidying" up by marriage.

Asey Mayo and Hildegarde Withers are an untidy American couple, and not only in Mrs. Eyles's sense. The murders they solve are always a bundle of loose ends, at which they keep tugging until one of the threads comes away in their hands with a murderer firmly attached to it. Of course, they make up in charm for their lucky-dip methods of detection, but you have to have a fondness for dependable Cape Cod bachelors or dominant New England spinsters before you can appreciate their popular appeal. *Sandbar Sinister* and *The Puzzle of the Briar Pipe* are evenly matched; both are moderately exciting, easy to run through, and slapdash in solution.

I confess to disappointment with Mr. Q. Patrick. He wrote so well in *S.S. Murder* that I am always expecting another masterpiece from him, but *Death Comes to School* is only a moderate performance. Mr. Patrick has borrowed the school murder theme from the detective author's library, adapted a solution from a famous detective play and added just a spice of his own personal talent for vivid description. The result would have been impressive if written twenty years ago, but to-day it is too like a *pot pourri*. *Courtier to Death* and *The Good Books* show the unkind working of the law of diminishing returns. Their authors should either let their inventive faculties lie fallow for a while or try a rotation of crops.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

A FINE ACHIEVEMENT

The Nonesuch Century. By DESMOND FLOWER, A. J. A. SYMONS and FRANCIS MEYNELL. *Nonesuch Press.* £2 2s.

When I was a schoolboy I managed to save enough money to buy a small Kelmscott book; and I still recollect my disappointment at the actual appearance of it. I can see now that it had some virtues; but it was painfully unreadable, and I enjoyed reading books. Mr. Symons, in his attractive appraisal of the virtues (which are many) of the Nonesuch Press, has, I think, rather foreshortened his view of the modern progress of printing. There were other commercial publishers, before Mathews and Lane or contemporary with them, who paid some attention to the looks of their books. Macmillan's early editions of Pater's books, the large paper *John Inglesant*, Christina Rossetti's *Poems* and the *Goblin Market* with Laurence Housmann's illustrations—none of these were contemptible. Then Osgood, MacIlvaine published some good books—Wilde's *Intentions*, for instance, and often had a pleasant title-page. There were also *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, which had dignity, while Fisher Unwin's Pseudonym Library and Cameo Series, though they may seem immeritable to-day, were at any rate off the beaten track of mere printed matter. A word too must be said of Andrew Tuer and the Leadenhall Press—not that any of their books could actually be called good, but that they illustrated and fomented dissatisfaction with the usual commercial article.

That dissatisfaction exploded in that explosive personality, William Morris: and then came a stream of successors, imitators, disciples and admirers, a stream not yet failing. It is a good list—the Vale, the Essex House, the Chiswick (an old, honourable firm) with its fine folios and quartos, the Eragny, the Arden, the Pear Tree, the Doves, the Ashendene, the Caradoc, the Golden Cockerel and the Gregynog. Yet the work of these admirable presses, and of such men as Emery Walker and Harry Kessler, did nothing to solve the problem, how to get beautiful books at a low cost. Meantime a revolution had occurred in printing, a revolution comparable to that which involved the displacement of wood-engraving by process-work. The name of the revolution is Monotype; and the two men who saw its possible application to fine printing were Stanley Morison and Francis Meynell. Let me quote Mr. Symons:

> Briefly, then: prior to 1899, all printing was set by hand; letter by letter the types were taken from the sorting cases, composed in the stick, transferred to the galley, and finally arranged in the forme ready for the press. When finished with, the used letters were replaced in their appropriate cases. To keep a large stock of different typefaces necessarily involved the sinking of considerable capital and the use of a capacious warehouse. Composing machines, on the other hand, do not use ready-cast type at all. An operator, at a keyboard resembling that of a typewriter, creates new type for each job; and, the job done, the used type goes back to the melting pot to be cast again, instead of being carefully sorted to its original place.

I am not entering here on a discussion of hand-set against machine-set printing. I see no reason to suppose that hand-set books will disappear before the giant, Monotype, any more than wood-engraving has disappeared before process. What is more important is that we should recognise what beautiful work can be

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accomplished by the machine, and praise those who have taken the opportunity of giving us the lovely things which we owe to the Nonesuch. That press is a superb instance of individual enterprise and courage. Three people started it—Francis Meynell, Vera Mendel and David Garnett; and many of us remember the crowded shop in Gerrard Street which saw the beginning of the gallant enterprise. Francis Meynell had had some experience with his father's firm, Burns and Oates; he had taste, he had audacity, he had vision, and what does not always accompany these qualities, he was modest, quick to take advice and entirely free from that pedantic bigotry which so often attacks printers. From the beginning the firm, under the redoubtable trio, pursued a fine and original policy. Although nearly all the great private presses—even the Doves and the Kelmscott—occasionally ventured on a book by a living author, none had made popular books. The scope of the Nonesuch may be grasped from the fact that their authors include Ernst Toller, James Laver, John Collier and Bernard Darwin. Again the private presses had, as a rule, a narrow range of sizes: the Essex House, it is true, showed a little more enterprise; but Mr. Ashbee never approached the splendid variety of the Nonesuch, whose books nothing but obstinacy can keep on the same set of shelves. In his notes to the bibliography Mr. Meynell comments severely on some of his house's productions; he is, I think, often too harsh; though, alas! I agreed so thoroughly with his denunciation of *Ruth*, that I never acquired that volume, whose scarcity has raised its price to stellar heights. I am a heretic about one of the most admired of the Nonesuch series, and one that I am sure has been of the greatest service to many readers. I do not like the compendious volumes—Blake, Donne, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Morris, Swift—I find the type too small for comfort, especially in the prose, and the volumes too stocky in their general appearance. I have no doubt that, while the Milton, the Montaigne, the Walton, the Homer and such lovely things as the Latin and the Greek Portraits represent the house's most treasurable works (and now I forget Thomson's *Seasons* and the George Herbert), the Nonesuch book I would least willingly miss is the Shakespeare. I do not think that even yet enough praise has been given to what is at once the most beautiful, the most convenient and, with no pretensions or fidgets, the most scholarly edition of the text.

A final word of thanks must be given to this volume. It contains Mr. Symons' appreciation, a bibliography (not so detailed as I should like) by Mr. Desmond Harmsworth, and an exquisitely right essay by Mr. Meynell, in which he tells, with humour and modesty, the story of his making of the Press. Then come a fine series of facsimiles of pages and bindings, and of plates from the illustrated and decorated books. It is altogether a handsome record of a great achievement. R. ELLIS ROBERTS

OURSELVES IN PHOTOGRAPH

The English at Home. By BILL BRANDT. Introduction by RAYMOND MORTIMER. *Batsford.* 5*s.*

Readers of the late Paul Cohen-Portheim's *The Spirit of London* will remember the excellent photographs, many taken by himself, which illustrated his text. They were snapshots of people lying idly in the park or marching in phalanxes to the station, of elderly men in pubs and clubs, children playing rounders, Gracie Fields on the stage of the Holborn Empire—all those *lieux communs* of London life which the essayist and the gossip-writer contrive to miss. Messrs. Batsford published that book (it was one of the best guides to London ever written), and now, on much the same principle, they offer us *The English at Home*.

Here, the photographs stand without any text, except an introduction, and they are not confined to London. On the front cover we see a fashionable group standing tip-toe on a coach at Ascot while the horses flash by: reverse the book, and we are looking into the solemn faces of a mother and her three children sitting in the cramped corner of a lodging; the dirty wall-paper, the back of an iron bedstead and the faces of the children seem tinted with that green gaslight one has seen in so many shabby windows. The contrast is typical of the book, for, as Mr. Raymond Mortimer points out in his brisk and pointed introduction (he makes an amusing excursion into the anthropological value of clothes), Brandt is an artist in whose work the propaganda remains implicit. And in these sixty-three photographs, which range from golf greens to the miner in his cage, he has succeeded with remarkable variety and terseness in impressing a scene. He is British born but most of his life has been spent abroad, and to that fact Mr. Mortimer attributes his gift for seizing things freshly and in their right perspective. The English are, I think, unique in their inability for seeing themselves plainly; only our best artists, such as Sickert, seem capable of representing the peculiarly English qualities without distortion. The camera, of course, is a notorious liar, but it is strange that we should have produced no photographers comparable, say, with Ruttmann or Cavalcanti, whose films of Berlin and Paris were delightful reflections in the days before a grimmer "purpose" began to animate the director of documentaries. Why on earth, to put the English scene in a film, should we be obliged to wrap it up in a B.B.C. message of piety, as Grierson has had to do, or drive our better directors like Anthony Asquith into filming novelettes? Mr. Bill Brandt's snapshots, at any rate, have a quality which personally I have not found in any of our documentary films. It is because each scene or figure has interested him purely for itself that his pictures are so good and carry such implications. He does not only set out to illustrate the contrast between rich and poor; he takes his pictures and the contrast is there. The best of them are—what can one call them?—pictorial epigrams, surprisingly, vividly, exactly, seen. The bookmakers on their plinths, appealing muscularly to the crowd, arresting a man here and there with a motion of the arm—what could be more expressive than those attitudes? Or there is the blind man sitting outside a teashop and looking, in his dark spectacles, like a gloomier Aga Khan; the Billingsgate fish-porter whose easy face and limp attitude match the great sagging fish on his hat; a queer straggle of Harrovians with their Spanish-looking hats against a row of elms. It is hard to do justice to the ingenuity and simplicity with which Mr. Brandt has represented these and many other common scenes. Though several of his subjects are picturesque he avoids picturesqueness; the squalor of his streets and interiors makes its own effect; and with admirable technique he has used just those movements and photographic textures which suit him best at the moment. He is an artist with an eye for fact. Indispensable quality—but how few photographers there are who can be said to possess it!

G. W. STONIER

BOTH ON BACH

Gentlemen, the Old Bach is Here. By CUNLIFFE OWEN. *Hutchinson.* 18*s.*

The Art of J. S. Bach. By A. E. F. DICKINSON. *Duckworth.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

No two books dealing with the same subject could provide a greater contrast than these two, and a superficial glance would incline one to dismiss the first as one of that large class of modern books which presents biography in the form of fiction to make easy and more palatable reading for a not too critical or well-informed public. This, however, would be to do Mr. Cunliffe Owen's book a grave injustice, for he has largely succeeded in an extremely difficult task, namely of imaginatively reconstructing the life of J. S. Bach in a way that is true to certain general principles, if not so highly individualised as to be completely satisfactory as a complete portrait of the individual.

I began to read Mr. Owen's book with a strong prejudice against it, for I like my biography pure and do not like to read words put into the mouth of an historical personage by someone else, however talented. I must admit, however, that Mr. Owen writes so sympathetically and understandingly and with such genuine and properly based admiration of his subject and of the nature of artistic genius that he almost justifies his method. Certainly his book is one that is likely to give pleasure and enlightenment to many persons for whom Mr. Dickinson's book must always remain inaccessible, and so it may be held to justify its existence. It must also be added that Mr. Owen bases his narrative on the known facts of Bach's life and that his standard of accuracy is unusually high for this sort of book. It would be pedantic to cavil at his use of the term of "foot-manual" for "pedal board," or to object to the general term of "clavier" in place of "clavichord"; but his narration of the death of J. S. Bach's son Bernard does go beyond the facts as we know them and objection may be taken to this episode. It is, however, so ingeniously used that one is almost inclined to forgive Mr. Owen his invention in admitting that it is a good one. His account of the relations between Bach and the Rector Ernesti is very well done, and if we admit that a writer may, in giving his own interpretation of historical personages, put his own words into their mouths so long as it is made clear that they are his own words, I cannot see why Mr. Owen may not be allowed to do in fiction what so many others have done in drama when writing historical

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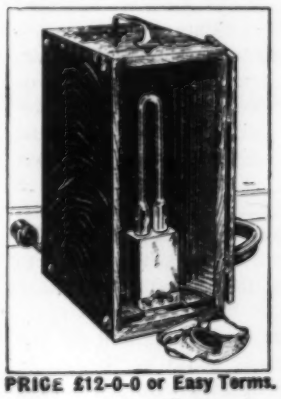

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plays. Everything depends on how well and convincingly it is done, and in this respect Mr. Owen has certainly not failed completely.

Mr. Dickinson's book is for the musician or well-informed amateur of music and it consists of a thorough analysis of the music of J. S. Bach done in a simple intelligible style in which there is, incidentally, a good deal of wholesome and illuminating criticism. For an amateur pianist, for example, who wishes to come to close grips with Bach's music by playing it with full comprehension Mr. Dickinson's book is the best guide I have come across. He takes the reader through all the clavier music, the organ works, the choral music, and the orchestral and chamber music, covering this immense amount of material in a surprisingly concise and adequate way. After all, this is the right way to know J. S. Bach, and anyone who goes through the music with the aid of Mr. Dickinson's book will have done something worth doing. To do this, however, presupposes a pretty high standard of musical education. Those who, unfortunately, can only enjoy their Bach in the concert-hall may be told that Mr. Owen's " thirty-one Leipzig variations on the theme of John Sebastian Bach " make far better reading than the average successful novel.

W. J. TURNER

SHORTER NOTICES

Greek Sculpture. Edited with an introduction by D. C. WILKINSON. *Chatto and Windus.* 5*s.*

Les Terres Cuites Grecques. Edited by JEAN CHARBONNEAUX. *Zwemmer.* 21*s.*

Mr. Wilkinson's anthology of Greek sculpture contains 104 plates, excellently reproduced, at a remarkably low price. Such a book should be most valuable for use in schools. Unluckily it gives a most misleading notion of Greek art: indeed nearly half the works reproduced are not Greek at all. Though there are hundreds of magnificent Greek sculptures extant, Mr. Wilkinson prefers to give us dreary Roman copies, from which all the merits of the originals have usually departed. If Mr. Wilkinson wished to show us Roman sculpture, he could have found incomparably better examples than these. Moreover, in his note on the Aeginetan marbles which he reproduces from Munich, he gives no hint that they are largely the work of Thorwaldsen. Altogether his taste seems curiously Victorian and the book is unfit to be placed in the hands of any inexperienced person without serious warning. M. Charbonneaux's book, on the other hand, can be most warmly recommended in every respect except that of price. These terracotta figurines were mass-produced, largely for interment in graves—Tanagra in Boeotia was, of course, the most important centre of the industry, but all the lovely Greek qualities which Roman imitation of Greek art so conspicuously miss are present in these handfuls of moulded clay. In Hellenistic times, it is true, they sometimes fall into an unpleasant, almost Japanese, realism, but the book ends with a late *Horse* from Southern Italy which is superlatively charming and quite un-Roman. The delicate colours often found in these figurines are lost in reproduction, but one cannot look through this book without renewed astonishment at the plastic genius of Greece in its extraordinary variety; grave, delicate, fresh, intimate or fluent, it is always exquisitely controlled and exquisitely expressive. The photographs taken by M. Sougez are particularly good and if Mr. Wilkinson's book is as uninspiring as a paradigm, M. Charbonneaux's is like a collection of poems. It forms an invaluable adjunct to M. Zervos's *L'Art en Grèce* (Zwemmer 32*s.* 6*d.*), the magnificent photographs in which appear to have escaped Mr. Wilkinson's attention.

The Anti-Drug Campaign. By S. H. BAILEY. *King.* 12*s.*

This book is the record of an important experiment in the art of international government. In 1909 an International Opium Commission at Shanghai, representing twelve different States, passed a few pious resolutions exhorting the Governments of the world to take action against the trade in illicit drugs. By July, 1935, fifty-six nations had ratified a Convention the aim of which was to restrict the manufacture of drugs to the amount required for legitimate purposes. The achievement is made the more remarkable in view of the peculiar intractability of the problem. The potential mobility of the industry, the special incentives which it gives to smugglers, the high administrative capacity which any form of control must demand, particularly in countries where government is not powerfully established, make the obstacles to international regulation appear almost insuperable. Yet, in spite of these difficulties and in the face of opposition from Governments and private capitalists with a direct interest in the maintenance of the trade, a comprehensive piece of international machinery has been instituted. Much still remains to be accomplished, and it is probable that the limitation imposed on manufacture will have to be applied to the production of the raw materials before complete success is achieved. But the experiment provides invaluable evidence as to how a free national economy in a particular product may be superseded by some form of international authority.

Martin Fierro. Adapted from the Spanish by WALTER OWEN. *Blackwell.* 32*s.* 6*d.*

Martin Fierro is the vernacular epic of the Argentine gaucho. Published in two parts, in 1872 and 1879 respectively, this long poem in ballad form attained immense popularity throughout South America and became the Bible of the simple, superstitious, bloody and courageous cattlemen who found in Martin Fierro the symbol of all their woes, the spokesman of their opinions and the epitome of their lives. Pressed into government service on the frontier, swindled of his pay, longing for his home which has been broken up now its master is gone, fighting the savage Indians and becoming their prisoner, and returning at last after a couple of murders which he commits in his cups, Fierro becomes the heroic, maligned outlaw. His sons take up the tale when he finds them again, and it is a tale of fights, robberies, swindling and trouble with women. The material is rich, and Mr. Owen, in his really admirable translation, has caught the authentic accent of these men, their peasant proverbs which they inherited from the Andalusian plains of their ancestors, and the strange spirit of their stoical, anarchic and mystical temperaments. There can be few if any modern vernacular poems as vivid and unspoiled as *Martin Fierro*, and this, the first English translation, is a book worth having. One's only criticism is of the illustrations, which are by Albert Guiraldez. Decorative and exact, they seem altogether too insipid for the vigorous narrative.

The Drama of Luigi Pirandello. By DOMENICO VITTORINI *Oxford University Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Those only who know the famous Italian dramatist personally could venture to question a character study which he himself declares to be a mirror in which he sees himself undistorted. Nevertheless it seems strange that Mr. Vittorini should deny to the man whose dramas exhibit as a rule the deepest compassion the quality of " kindness "; and we can only assume that the denial points to some discrepancy between Italian thought and English expression. The character sketch with which the book opens is peculiarly valuable for the light it throws on the tortured life of the dramatist, and therefore on the plays in which illusion and reality are at irresolvable odds. For the rest it may be said that English admirers of Pirandello, who know his work only through the few translations and the small number of plays produced in this country, will find in Mr. Vittorini's acute, concise, and vivid descriptions of the more important plays in each period of their author's development, the next best thing to actual study of them in the library or the theatre.

About Motoring

CYCLISTS' OBJECTIONS TO REAR LAMPS

ROAD users should ideally be banded together in a mutual association for each others' convenience and the safety of transit. In actual fact, road users are divided into coteries with interests which appear to be divergent. Such bodies as the Pedestrians' Association, the Cyclists' Touring Club and the various motoring organisations very naturally and pardonably lobby against each other in various fields of traffic controversy. The most burning point at issue is the desire of most motorists that all pedal cycles should be compelled to carry rear lamps, against which the majority of cyclists present a passionate resistance. Cyclists commonly imagine that motorists press for this change in the law simply or mainly because they wish to be able to scorch ahead when in the absence of tail lamps they cannot ascertain by unaided human vision that the road is clear; in other words, that the demand for cycle tail lamps is unadulterated speed lust. This implication angers motorists, because if a few of them are inflamed by speed lust, the majority of them are both humane and nervous. They are obsessed by the dread of collision with an unlit cycle, especially when the motorist is partly dazzled by the lamps of some approaching car. It is urged that the motorist should stop dead whenever his vision is less than complete; but in actual fact this is impossible, since on many busy highways at certain hours (especially in the early evening) all traffic proceeds in a semi-dazzled condition. This quite logical and entirely philanthropic attitude of the bulk of motorists is seldom realised by cyclists. On the other hand, motorists as a class utterly fail to do justice to the warmth and reason of the cyclists' opposition to the proposed " reform." The cyclists find that their enjoyment of the roads has been very substantially impaired by the growth of motoring. Even if all motorists could be trusted to drive with consideration and sense (which they cannot), a long cycling journey is far less pleasant than once it was. To say the least, it is alarming to pedal along for miles in a state of being continually overtaken by vehicles weighing on the average a ton, and travelling at an average speed of perhaps 35 miles an hour.

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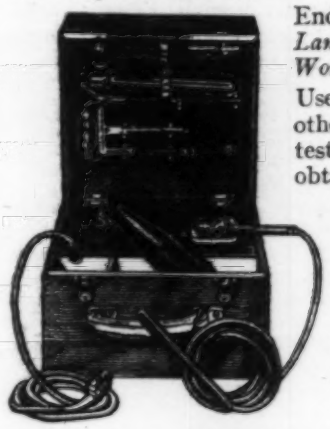

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The risk of an accident is never out of the cyclist's mind, quite apart from the noise, the smell, the wind of passage, and on occasions dust and fumes of burnt hydrocarbons. Hence most cyclists approach the problem in a very pardonable spirit of resentment and animosity.

The spearpoint of the cyclists' opposition is their conviction that motorists desire more speed, and that under conditions of very partial vision. I have stated that this is only fractionally true, or rather true of a very small minority of motorists; the majority are perfectly honest when they ascribe their support of universal tail lamps to more humane considerations. The cyclists buttress this opposition on the logical claim that no road user should proceed where he cannot see with precision. Unfortunately, this claim cannot be realised in practice. It would entail traffic coming to a complete and immediate stop in fog. It would entail traffic on the Portsmouth Road (say about Kingston and Esher) coming to a complete stop any dusky evening when London is emptying, and every driver or cyclist in the stream is almost continuously reduced to imperfect vision by dazzle. These unquestionable facts must always be set against the equally unquestionable fact that the road-hog presses universal tail lamps because he wishes to travel faster at night.

Cyclists further aver that even if tail lamps were desirable on general grounds (which they passionately deny), their expense and unreliability prohibit their adoption on pedal cycles. Oil lamps are undependable, messy and generally tiresome. A tail lamp at the rear of a cycle is exposed and vulnerable. Dry battery electric tail lamps break their filaments without the rider discovering promptly that his rear lamp is out of action. With one reservation these strictures are true. The reservation is that science can easily produce cheap electric tail lamps, drawing their current from dry batteries, which can register a high degree of reliability, and cost a trivial sum, compared to the safety and convenience which would result from their use. No sane motorist can possibly desire that even in a Utopian world cyclists should employ any other type of tail lamp; it is probable that satisfactory lamps of this pattern could be provided immediately.

Cyclists proceed to urge that if tail lamps were imposed upon them, the guilty motor driver in any running-down case would often plead that the victim's tail lamp was out; and that in the absence of impartial witnesses this defence would often succeed. We must all admit that dishonourable men, faced with the threat of a conviction for manslaughter, will lie. Under the existing law the motorist can truthfully plead that he failed to see the cyclist, and may so escape any criminal charge, whilst his insurance company will bear any financial consequences. There does not appear to be any solution of this serious objection so long as cyclists and motorists use one and the same track; the exclusion of cyclists from the carriage way would naturally produce much more violent opposition than the proposal of universal tail lamps. This brings us again to another Utopian suggestion. In logic it is as foolish to group cyclists, pedestrians and fast heavy motor cars on one track as it would be to allow nursemaids to wheel perambulators between the rails on which the *Flying Scot* hurtles from Euston to Edinburgh. But as prams and express trains have never shared the same 6-foot strips of land, nobody will ever propound this latter insanity. Yet since walkers, horses, prams, cycles and motor vehicles have all established legal rights to the use of one and the same road, only a radical innovation in law and practice can ever segregate the various classes of traffic on to separate tracks. Some nations evince a tendency to banish horse traffic from certain roads; this tendency is popularly accepted, because only a very small minority of people wish to drive horses on the roads in question; and being a minority, the State can impose suffering upon them, as the badge of their tribe. But as cyclists and pedestrians still outnumber motorists, no State can penalise its majorities against their will.

The question in its naked essence thus seems insoluble. It may be worth while to explore a compromise. The existing red reflex mirrors which cyclists carry possess but a moderate efficiency, in that the best of them only show up clearly when they trap the rays of head lamps over a narrow angle of impact. A curved bracket, carrying two or three of these tiny ruby mirrors would be twice or thrice as effective. Experiments in this direction might produce a compromise tolerably acceptable to all parties. It would not enable the road-hog to scorch blindly into a tunnel of gloom; it would not impose any gross expense or inconvenience upon cyclists; and it would relieve the humane and semi-dazzled motorist of a fraction of his anxieties.

R. E. DAVIDSON

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A First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second of Half a Guinea are offered for the most suitable testimonials. The complex circumstances demand fuller treatment than is usual, but no recommendation could reasonably run to more than 250 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, March 6th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 309

Set by Hamish Miles

Assume, please, that seven years from now it becomes suddenly but irrefutably obvious that a new Ice Age is creeping southward and must, within a few months, overwhelm the British Isles. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best forecasts, not exceeding 300 words, of a characteristic leading article on this imminent crisis from one of the following newspapers: the *Times*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Worker*, the *Observer*, *Pravda*, the *Corriere della Sera*. To help matters it may further be assumed that the National Government is still there.

Report by Hamish Miles

Catastrophe appealed strongly to competitors, and the level of achievement, so far as my experience goes, was decidedly high. Ineluctable doom, of course, would be a Sabbath godsend for Mr. Garvin, and the *Observer* was the favourite choice. Some of the headline clarion-calls were indistinguishable from the original: such as T. Naisby's:

IT APPROACHES
MEASURES AND MEN
HALLUCINATIONS OR PREPARATIONS?

or Kenneth Bradshaw's:

THE ICEBREAKERS' MANDATE
SPEED, THE WATCHWORD
A MINISTRY OF GLACIAL EMERGENCY
BRITAIN YET SHALL STAND!

The crisis, it need hardly be said, was faced with calmness and a fine sense of historical and geological perspective by the *Times*. "Amp" headed her leader "*Advenit Glacies?*" and reassured the nation by stating, *inter alia*:

> Ice is, of course, merely frozen water rendered solid by exposure to low temperature. Only last Wednesday we printed a letter from PROFESSOR EVERBRIGHT of All Souls, in which he was able to give some pungent reminiscences of an earlier "Ice Age" and afford some inkling of what we have to expect. . . . Those who have never actually seen an ice floe can scarcely imagine the inconceivable beauty which it carries with it. In the Antarctic, with which, alas, too few persons are familiar . . .

Nobody tried to imagine what the *Corriere della Sera* would call out from behind the Alps. Perhaps readers of this journal suppose that Fascist journalism will by then be no more? The *Pravda* entries were lively, but rather obvious, though Charlotte Kett did well. And the theme was well suited, of course, to the *Daily Express* "Opinion" leader style, especially in its borrowed *Times* manner. Here "D. G. B." excelled, in a very clever pastiche, with an italicised *leitmotiv*: "*Ice comes South . . .*" and an ingenious proposal to ship the population to India, where hospitality would be granted in return for the past services of the Raj ("*United we stand, divided we freeze*"). I almost recommended him for a prize, but he ended weakly and was in some doubt

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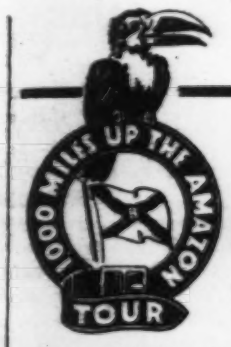

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WANTED immediately, one to two rooms furnished near Gordon Square, W.C. Box 68, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.

as to whether Lord Beaverbrook in person or the leader-writer was at work—the styles are totally different. The choice was difficult, but, all things considered, I think T. E. Casson and J. F. Warren should have first and second awards, respectively.

FIRST PRIZE

FROM THE *Observer* OF FEBRUARY, 1943

NIFELHEIM

Incredible as it may appear, Mr. Baldwin, who was returned to power with a discretionary mandate, has proved himself wholly unworthy of his trust. The country relied on him. They accepted him as a "plain blunt man," no orator indeed, but a friend of Caesar, so far as his limited abilities admitted. They believed that he would show himself staunch to the idea of Empire, a sound imperialist, and a careful guardian of the fiscus. Britain, like Ophelia, was the more mistaken.

This knock-kneed Hamlet, this pitiable rag and patches Prince of Denmark—"fat and pursy," forsooth, and bolstered with the "too, too solid flesh"—must have known that there was something rotten in the State; he must have heard the rat gnawing at the dikes. The least he could have done was to have cackled in the Capitol. But, like a disloyal goose, he filled his own crop with millet, and slept in the Forum, his head under his wing, balancing himself, in his effete Toryism, on the one leg of decrepit traditionalism. Unlike Lady Macbeth, he had not even the penitence to walk in his sleep, and call upon the gods of Asgard to wash out the parricidal stain. Out, out, brief candle, signifying nothing!

Let us have a plain Labour Government of snow-shovellers and icy dustmen. Let there be no mistake. Like a slow, glassy-eyed, remorseless, cold-bellied Python, the glacier of the North is creeping down on us, ready to eviscerate our civilisation and swallow it whole, greased with its slimy saliva. We pointed this out at the Treaty of Versailles. It is the Nordic peril. If Mr. Baldwin has not had the prescience to foretell Nifelheim, we had. A hundred thousand snow-ploughs will not be too many. Ten million foot-warmers will be too few.

T. E. CASSON

SECOND PRIZE

OPINION (*Daily Express*)

We must prepare for another ice age; so much is certain. Britain produces the best ice in the world; so much also is certain. You would think that British labour would get the job of supplying Britain with ice? Not a bit of it! The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, who deal with these things, announce that all the ice required is coming from Iceland and Greenland! All reasonable Britons will join with the *Daily Express* in declaring that a British ice-age should have British ice.

J. F. WARREN

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 166.—WIENER-SCHNITZEL

The Wiener-Schnitzel boundary problem has long been agitating the League. It was, therefore, a distinct scoop for the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION when, last week, we intercepted a cipher letter from Lord Howdidoo to the Embassy. Its wording is as follows:

"Your Excellency:

As regards *Wiener-Schnitzel*, His Transparency and I have now come to a definite agreement. What I might call the 'Chinese approach' is off (you remember your Tennyson? *Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.*)

So we will revert, as it were, to European methods, tackling the thing from the other end. As what we have agreed on is at present very secret, I had better put it into cipher:

H T L L A	O R P B E
I R E W Y	O F T E Z
E E T R E	Y N A M T
O I R I W	V A E T H
O E Y N O	T E I N T
T R L R O	S H R T R
R K R E S	E N O T E
E A I V H	W C S L I

—*Howdidoo*"

Unfortunately, we cannot decode the message.

Can any reader help?

PROBLEM 164.—CHEZ PEWTRID

This is by no means a difficult problem, for the simple reason that 12 is the smallest number having three different pairs of factors. Hence there are at least six players in a team, while experiment will soon show that there cannot be fewer than 5 teams. Nor can there be more than 9 players in a team, because, if there are 10 or more, the prize money is less than the smallest number which it will be necessary to partition. Whence it quickly follows that there are either 7 players in a team, the winners dividing their money:

1 2 3 4 6 7 12,

or 8 players, the winners dividing:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 12.

In either case, I receive 7s.

PROBLEM 163.—PHONEY PHONE

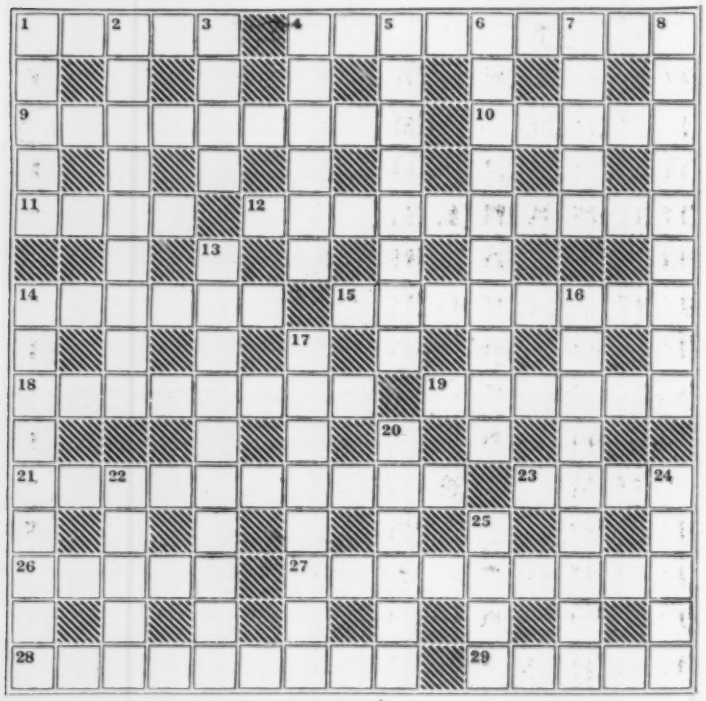
A set of Low's cartoons goes to: H. G. Morgan, 26 Campbell Road, Salisbury, Wilts.

Four points are awarded.

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 312

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday. Prize-winners should address their claims to the Editor.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

Mrs. W. Senior, 17 Fairholme Road, Heaton Norris, Stockport, Cheshire.

ACROSS

1. A verbal ropeway, so to speak.
4. They should give you the go by.
9. Not a shoe shop but a shoe's hop.
10. Black Country.
11. 316.
12. Flier who presumably carries his drink in his tail.
14. They would provide suitable food for the Yeomen of the Guard.
15. Produces chilly sounding hot stuff.
18. Come, ride in the middle way.
19. Much used when women were stiff necked.
21. Fears arrests.
23. Composers often upset the soup like this.
26. Take the train for this Italian port.
27. Such people will not stand on one side.
28. Manx Legislature put out by the Papal Insignia.
29. Harmonious mixture.

DOWN

1. Crow, not crows.
2. Quarrel with a killing end.
3. God's might be windfalls.
4. Suitable walling for doctors.
5. Framework result when you sell teak.
6. Good place for the lookout man to sit.
7. He automatically acts without feeling.
8. An American citizen perhaps.
13. Invalid things to make.
14. "I'm Bob's cat" it might say, boastfully.
16. Inexpensive form of swagger in London.
17. Is this drawn by the forester?
20. How a political party takes up a parental attitude to its would-be M.P.s.
22. Not always played as softly as this part of its name suggests.
24. The cover goes under, thus.
25. Usual name for cancer.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

C	H	A	R	L	O	T	T	E	B	R	O	N	T	E
R	■	L	■	O	■	O	■	L	■	U	■	A	■	V
I	X	I	O	N	■	P	L	A	T	I	T	U	D	E
M	■	Q	■	G	■	N	■	I	■	N	■	T	■	N
S	O	U	T	H	D	O	W	N	S	■	N	I	S	I
O	■	O	■	E	■	T	■	E	■	S	■	L	■	N
N	U	T	H	A	T	C	H	■	S	T	R	I	N	G
R	■	■	■	D	■	H	■	S	■	R	■	■	■	P
A	U	D	R	E	Y	■	S	T	R	O	N	G	E	R
M	■	E	■	D	■	B	■	R	■	N	■	R	■	I
B	R	A	C	■	D	I	N	I	N	G	R	O	O	M
L	■	D	■	A	■	G	■	P	■	R	■	W	■	R
E	A	S	T	C	H	E	A	P	■	O	U	T	D	O
R	■	E	■	R	■	N	■	E	■	O	■	H	■	S
S	E	A	W	E	E	D	■	D	E	M	E	S	N	E

London Amusements

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All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

ALDWYCH. The Dominant Sex. Wed., Sat.
ALHAMBRA. Tulip Time. Wed. & Sat.
APOLLO. Espionage. Wed. & Sat.
COLISEUM. "Twenty to One." Wed. & Sat.
DUCHESS. Night Must Fall. Thurs. & Sat.
GARRICK. Two Mrs. Carrolls. Tues., Sat.
GLOBE. "Call It a Day." Wed., Th. & Sat.
HIPPODROME. Please Teacher! Th., Sat.
LYRIC. Tovarich. Wed. & Th.
MERCURY. Murder in the Cathedral. F., S.
PHOENIX. "To-night at 8.30." Tues. & Sat.
PLAYHOUSE. "Mary Tudor." Th. & Sat.
ST. JAMES.' 'Pride and Prejudice.' W. & S.
ST. MARTIN'S. No Exit. Tues. & Fri.
SAVOY. La Meri. Wed., Sat., 2.45.
SHAFTESBURY. "Promise." Wed. & Sat.
STRAND. 1066 and All That. Tues. & Sat.
W'MINSTER. Dog Beneath the Skin. Th., S.
WHITEHALL. Anthony & Anna. W. & S.

THEATRES

ALDWYCH. 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30. Tem. 6404.
THE DOMINANT SEX.
THE TALK OF LONDON. (15th MONTH.)

ALHAMBRA, EVGS., 6.15 & 9. Weds. & Sats. 2.30
TULIP TIME. A Comedy with Music.
THE FUNNIEST PLAY SEEN FOR YEARS.
Prices (including tax) 10/6 to 1/3 Whitehall 2525.

APOLLO. Gerrard 2663. (Smoking.)
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
MARION LORNE & Walter Hackett's Production.
ESPIONAGE.

COLISEUM. Tem. Bar 3161. EVGS., 6.15 & 9.
Mats., Weds. & Sats. at 2.30.
"TWENTY TO ONE."
THE FUNNIEST MUSICAL SPORTING FARCE EVER STAGED.
LUPINO LANE, CLIFFORD MOLLISON.

DUCHESS. (Tem. 8243.) 8.30, Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.
EMLYN WILLIAMS in his own Play
NIGHT MUST FALL.
ANGELA BADDELEY MAY WHITTY

GARRICK. EVGS., 8.30. MATS., Tues., Sat., 2.30.
LESLIE BANKS & ELENA MIRAMOVA in
THE TWO MRS. CARROLLS.
with LOUISE HAMPTON.

GLOBE. Ger. 1592. Evgs., 8.15 Sharp.
Mats., Weds., Thurs., Sats., 2.30.
FAY COMPTON & OWEN NARES in
"CALL IT A DAY."
By Dodie Smith.

HIPPODROME. Ger. 3272.
Evgs. at 8.15. Mats., Thur. and Sats., 2.30.
BOBBY HOWES in
"PLEASE TEACHER!"
VERA PEARCE. WYLIE WATSON. BERTHA BELMORE.

LYRIC. (Ger. 3686.) 8.30. Mats., Wed., Th., 2.30.
GILBERT MILLER presents
TOVARICH.
CEDRIC HARDWICKE, EUGENIE LEONTOVICH.

MERCURY. Nottg. Hill Gate. 2s. 6d. to 6s. Park 1000.
Now Nightly (except Mons.) at 8.30. Fri., Sat., 2.30.
MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL.
By T. S. Eliot. Robert Speaight as Becket.
"The one great play by a contemporary dramatist now to be seen in England."—*Times*.
Every SUNDAY at 9, BALLET CLUB.

PHOENIX. Tem. 8611. 8.30. Tues., Sat., 2.30.
GERTRUDE LAWRENCE. NOEL COWARD.
"TO-NIGHT AT 8.30."
Three Plays by Noel Coward.

PLAYHOUSE. 8.30. Th., Sat., 2.30. Whi. 7774.
FLORA ROBSON in
"MARY TUDOR."
JOYCE BLAND. LAWRENCE ANDERSON.

ST. JAMES.' (Whitehall 3903.)
Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
GILBERT MILLER and MAX GORDON present
"PRIDE AND PREJUDICE."

ST. MARTIN'S. Tem. 1443. 8.40. Tues., Fri., 2.30.
ROBERT DOUGLAS in
NO EXIT.
CYRIL RAYMOND. GILLIAN LIND. RONALD SIMPSON.

SAVOY. Mon. next & Evgs. at 8.45.
LA MERI.
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